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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

Website: salarnews.in | www.magzter.com | 12 MAY 2024 | SUNDAY | BENGALURU | 3 DHUL-QIDAH, 1445 AH | Vol 4 | Issue No 113 | Pages: 8

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Phase 4 campaign for 96 seats ends on a chaotic note

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

Campaigning for 13 May elections in 96 Lok Sabha constituencies across 10 states and Union territories, including all seats in Andhra Pradesh where Assembly elections are also being held concurrently, concluded on Saturday evening.

Issues like reservations, appeasement politics, corruption and jobs dominated the battle of narratives in the fourth phase of Lok Sabha elections.

Among the prominent candidates in the fray are Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav (Kannauj, UP), Union ministers Giriraj Singh (Begusarai, Bihar) and Nityanand Rai (Ujiarpur, Bihar), Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury (Baharampur, WB), BJP's Pankaja Munde (Beed, Maharashtra), AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi (Hyderabad, Telangana) and Andhra Pradesh Congress President YS Sharmila (Kadapa).

Union minister Ajay Kumar Mishra Teni, whose son is an accused in the 2021 Lakhimpur Kheri violence case, is eyeing a hat-trick from Kheri (UP), while TMC's Mahua Moitra, who was expelled from Lok Sabha in the wake of cash-for query allegations, is seeking re-election from Krishnanagar in West Bengal.

Polling will be held on Monday in 17 seats in Telangana **PHOTO: ANI**

Polling will be held on Monday in 17 Lok Sabha seats in Telangana, 25 in Andhra Pradesh, 13 in Uttar Pradesh, 5 in Bihar, 4 in Jharkhand, 8 in Madhya Pradesh, 11 in Maharashtra, 4 in Odisha, 8 in West Bengal and 1 in Jammu and Kashmir. BJP-led NDA has MPs from over 40 of these 96 seats.

Voting will simultaneously be held in 175 Assembly seats in Andhra Pradesh, which is witnessing a triangular contest involving YSRC, Congress-led INDIA bloc and NDA, comprising BJP, Chandrababu Naidu-led TDP and Pawan Kalyan-led Jana Sena Party (JSP). The campaign saw BJP leaders led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi attacking Congress over the remarks of Rahul Gandhi's close aide Sam Pitroda on "race" and "skin colour" of Indians. They accused the INDIA bloc parties of being "anti-Hindu" and engaging in "loot, appeasement" and "dynastic politics". Congress targeted BJP over Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "tempo loads of money" remarks and persisted with its offensive on the issues of protecting Constitution and reservations.

In Andhra Pradesh, the ruling YSRCP is contesting in all 175 Assembly seats and 25 Lok Sabha constituencies in the state. *—PTI*

At 75, Modi will make Shah PM: Kejriwal

He says Oppn leaders will be jailed if BJP wins

Arvind Kejriwal during a road show in New Delhi **PHOTO: PTI**

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

A day after his release on interim bail, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal launched a blistering attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi alleging he is asking for votes for Union Home Minister Amit Shah, claiming that the latter will be Modi's successor after he "retires" on turning 75

He attacked Modi saying he was on a "One nation, One leader" mission to impose "dictatorship" by putting all leaders from Opposition behind bars and "politically finishing off" those in BJP.

He asserted that AAP will be part of the next government at the Centre and will get full statehood for Delhi.

"In the last 20 hours after release from jail, I talked to poll experts and people, and got to know BJP is not going to form the government," Kejriwal said.

Ahead of restarting his election campaign, Kejriwal along with his wife Sunita and Punjab counterpart Bhagwant Mann offered prayers at the Hanuman temple in central Delhi's Connaught Place.

> **I am asking BJP who will be their PM. Modi ji is turning 75 next year. He had made the rule that people aged 75 would be retired. They retired LK Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi, Sumitra Mahajan**
> -Arvind Kejriwal, AAP Chief

On Friday, Supreme Court granted Kejriwal interim bail in a money laundering case linked to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam to enable him to campaign in the Lok Sabha elections.

In his speech, Kejriwal claimed that if BJP wins, all Opposition leaders including Mamata Banerjee, Tejashvi Yadav, MK Stalin, Pinarayi Vijayan and Uddhav Thackeray, will be in jail. *—PTI*

NADDA, SHAH ASSERT MODI WILL LEAD NEW GOVT

NEW DELHI/HYDERABAD, 11 MAY

Senior BJP leaders, including Union ministers Amit Shah and Rajnath Singh, asserted on Saturday that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will complete his full term if elected to power, refuting the Aam Aadmi Party's claim that Modi wants Shah to succeed him after turning 75 next year.

Hitting back, BJP president JP Nadda said the Opposition alliance has no policy and programme to counter Modi. Rattled after sensing defeat, Kejriwal and other opposition leaders are now solely devoted to misleading the country and are talking about an irrelevant issue of Modi's age, he said.

Replying to a query, Shah also told reporters in Hyderabad that there was no such age bar mentioned in BJP's constitution, asserting that there was no confusion in BJP over the matter.

BJP spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi said Kejriwal's succession claim was an acknowledgement on his part that Modi is set to retain power for a third term. *—PTI*

ALLOTS 1 SEAT TO JD(S)

BJP names 5 MLC candidates in K'taka

BENGALURU: , 11 MAY

BJP on Saturday announced its candidates for five out of six Legislative Council seats, which will go to polls on 3 June.

The party has allotted one seat to its ally JD(S).

The six seats will be falling vacant due to the retirement of sitting members on June 21.

BJP has decided to field Amarnath Patil from Karnataka North East Graduates' constituency, Dhananjay Sarji from Karnataka South West Graduates' constituency, A Devegowda from Bangalore Graduates' constituency, YA Narayanaswamy from South East Teachers' constituency and EC Ningaraju from South Teachers' Constituency.

The party did not announce its candidate for South West Teachers' constituency as it has left it to its ally Janata Dal (Secular).

BS Yediyurappa **PHOTO: PTI**

The notification has already been issued and the last date of filing nomination is May 16 and the last date of withdrawal of nomination is 20 May.

The polls will be held on 3 June and the counting of votes will take place on June 6, according to the Election Commission of India.

Former Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa said BJP and JD(S) will contestthe polls together and the alliance would not be affected in the wake of cases being filed against present MP Prajwal Revanna over sexual abuse of several women. *—PTI*

M'LURU MAN CREATES CHAOS ON AI PLANE, BOOKED

MANGALURU, 11 MAY

An FIR was registered against a passenger for unruly behaviour during a flight between Dubai and Mangaluru following a complaint by the Air India Express crew, police said on Saturday.

The incident took place on 9 May and the FIR was filed the same evening. According to police, Mohammed travelled from Dubai to Mangaluru in an Air India Express flight. After the aircraft took off from Dubai, Mohammad went to the toilet and then came out and asked the crew about a person called Krishna, who was not on the passenger list of that flight. He further heckled the crew by asking irrelevant questions. He then took off the life jacket he had on the plane, gave it to the crew and said he would use it after landing.

He also allegedly said that he wanted to fly on his own over the sea when the flight was over the Arabian Sea, police said. *—PTI*

BENGALURU'S FORECAST

Yesterday
Min temp: 21°C
Max temp: 32°C

Today
Min temp: 22°C
Max temp: 32°C

PHOTO: PTI

Former Karnataka CM SM Krishna in ICU

BENGALURU, 11 MAY

Former External Affairs Minister and ex-Karnataka Chief Minister SM Krishna is in the intensive care unit and is being treated by a critical care team, a private hospital said on Saturday. The 92-year-old veteran leader was admitted to the Manipal Hospital in Bengaluru on 29 April. "Shri SM Krishna, admitted to ICU Manipal Hospital, continues to be in ICU and is on adequate support. He is being treated by Dr Satyanarayana Mysore and a critical care team led by Dr Sunil Karanth," the hospital said in a statement. Krishna had also served as the Maharashtra Governor and Karnataka Assembly Speaker. *—PTI*

Flash floods kill more than 300 in Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD, 11 MAY

Flash floods from unusually heavy seasonal rains in Afghanistan have killed more than 300 people and destroyed over 1,000 houses, the UN food agency said on Saturday. The World Food Programme said it was distributing biscuits to the survivors of flood hit Afghanistan over the last few weeks, mostly the northern province of Baghlan, which bore the brunt of the deluges on Friday. In neighbouring Takhar province, state-owned media outlets reported the floods killed at least 20 people. Zabihullah Mujahid, the chief spokesman for the Taliban government, posted on the social media platform X that "hundreds ... have succumbed to these calamitous floods, while a substantial number have sustained injuries." *—PTI*

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Dahod repolls after voting livestreamed

DAHOD, 11 MAY

Repolling was held at Parthampura booth under Dahod Lok Sabha constituency in Gujarat on Saturday after the Commission declared 7 May voting as null and void as a BJP man had live-streamed the process from the booth.

Parthampur falls under Santrampur taluka of Mahisagar district and is part of Dahod (Scheduled Tribe-reserved) Lok Sabha seat.

EC had declared as null and void 7 May voting and ordered repolling at the Parthampur booth after man live-streaming voting from inside the booth went viral.

Four election officials, including a presiding officer, an assistant presiding officer and two polling officers as well a police constable were suspended in connection with the incident.

EC Phase 3 voter turnout

The updated voter turnout figures for the third phase of polling in the Lok Sabha elections stood at 65.68 per cent, EC said on Saturday. *—PTI*

B'luru to get heavy rains till Tuesday

BENGALURU, 11 MAY

After experiencing record-breaking high temperatures in April, Bengaluru residents can finally breathe a sigh of relief as May brought cooler weather and much-needed rain. India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a yellow alert (rainfall ranging between 64.5mm and 115mm) for the City until 14 May.

Meanwhile, heavy rain and thunderstorms lashed the City on Friday night inundating low-lying areas, uprooting electric poles and trees and damaging vehicles. A tree uprooted and fell onto an electric transformer near Mahatma Gandhi Park in Nagarbhavi.

In Deepanjali Nagar, three electric poles were uprooted. Two cars and one tempo traveller parked outside were crushed by a huge tree. A petrol bunk has been flooded due to heavy rains in Rajarajeshwari Nagar. The compound wall of Traffic and Transit Management Centre in Kengeri collapsed and the parking area was inundated. Many residents in Annapoorneshwari Nagar were forced to spend sleepless nights as their houses were inundated due to heavy rain.

A huge tree falls on a car in RR Nagar due after heavy rains lash on Friday **PHOTO: SALAR**

The City received rainfall ranging between 28mm and 89mm on Friday, according to authorities. Bengaluru can expect similar weather conditions, including rain, thunderstorms, and strong winds, over the next five days.

BBMP deploys Tree Harvesting Teams

'Tree Harvesting Teams' deployed by BBMP to address hazards caused by fallen trees and branches during rains have cleared 271 trees and 483 twigs/branches in the City. *—Salar News*

PoK sees clashes amidst strike against police action

ISLAMABAD, 11 MAR

Businesses remained closed and normal life was affected during a crippling strike in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir's capital Muzaffarabad to protest against a police crackdown, which led to a confrontation between the security forces and demonstrators, a local media report said on Saturday.

The shutter-down and wheel-jam strike in the Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir's (PoK) Muzaffarabad on Friday, on a call by the Jammu Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JKJAAC), also saw police resort to teargas shelling, affecting people in homes and mosques as well, after demonstrators pelted stones, the Dawn newspaper reported. Protests were held in Samahni, Sehansa, Mirpur, Rawalakot, Khuiratta, Tattapani, Hattian Bala, all in PoK. The JKJAAC gave the strike call for Friday after several of its leaders and activists were arrested by police in overnight raids in different parts of Muzaffarabad and Mirpur divisions, it said, adding that the committee had last month announced that people from across the state would stage a long march towards Muzaffarabad on 11 May.

The public action committee is a leading rights movement protesting the "unjust" taxes levied on electricity bills. It had observed a similar shutter-down strike in August last year. *—PTI*

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CHALLENGES PM

Rahul up for debate with Modi

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

Lauding the initiative for a public debate on the Lok Sabha elections, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday said he or party Chief Mallikarjun Kharge would be pleased to participate in such a discussion and expressed hope that Prime Minister Narendra Modi would also take part.

"It would be a positive initiative for the major parties to present their vision to the country from one platform for a healthy democracy," Gandhi said on X.

He also added that the nation expects Modi to participate in the debate.

He shared on X his reply to Justice (Retd) Madan B Lokur, Justice (Retd) Ajit P Shah and N Ram, who had written to him and Modi earlier this week, inviting them to a platform for a debate on the key election issues.

Rahul Gandhi **PHOTO: PTI**

In their letter addressed to the country's leaders, the trio had stated that the proposal for the debate was non-partisan and in the broader interest of every citizen.

Gandhi said he discussed the invitation with Kharge and they agreed that such a debate would help people understand "our respective vision and enable them to make an informed choice".

"It is also critical to put to rest any unsubstantiated allegations attributed to our respective parties. As the principal parties fighting the election, the public deserve to hear from their leaders directly," Gandhi said in his letter replying to the invitation.

"Please do let us know if and when the Prime Minister agrees to participate, following which we can discuss the details and format of the debate," he added. *—PTI*

India prepared for 2036 Olympic bid, says Anurag

HAMIRPUR, 11 MAY

Bullish about India's chances of securing the 2036 Olympic hosting rights, Sports Minister Anurag Thakur said the country has the wherewithal to compete with other contenders in the bidding war and rejected criticism that the money would be better spent on welfare schemes.

The host of the Games will be decided by the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) future host commission not before 2026 or 2027 as the IOC is due to elect a new president next year. India's ambitious interest has found support from current IOC head Thomas Bach. *—PTI*

7 held for giving electric shock to 3 men's private parts

KALABURAGI, 11 MAY

Seven people were arrested here for torturing a second-hand car dealer and two others by giving electric shock to their private parts, police said on Saturday Police arrested Imran Patel, Mohammed Mateen, Ramesh Doddamani, Sagar Koli and their accomplices. Second-hand car dealer Ramesh Madiwala, Sameeruddin and Abdul Rehman were tortured for allegedly delaying delivery of a vehicle. The accused allegedly demanded money for their release. Police arrested seven people while a hunt is on for others involved in the incident.—*PTI*

Girl fails SSLC exam, ends life in Kolar

KOLAR, 11 MAY

A 16-year-old girl who failed in all six subjects of the SSLC exam committed suicide by hanging in her house at Bangarpet on Friday evening.Kavya, a student of Government Girls' High School in Bangarpet, was sad after the results came out on Thursday. On Friday, when her family members went out, she locked herself in her room and committed suicide. As she did not come out for a long time, the parents opened the door of the room when they found her hanging. Though efforts were made to retrieve her at Government Hospital, it proved futile. —***Salar News***

Scanning centre closed after male foeticide in Kolar

KOLAR, 11 MAY

A scanning centre at Malur in Kolar district was closed down after a three-month-old male foetus was aborted. The sex determination and abortion took place at Sanjana Scanning Centre attached to a private nursing home here on Thursday. A couple, Murugesh and Anitha, from Bethamangala near KGF came to Sanjana Scanning Centre on Wednesday seeking sex determination. The staff at the centre after conducting the tests revealed that it was a female foetus. As they already had two girl children, the couple expressed their dismay at the finding. A nurse attached to the centre told the couple that the female foetus could be changed to a male foetus and it would cost them around Rs 25,000, the couple said in a complaint. The couple paid the amount and a couple of pills were given to the pregnant woman. Later, the woman developed pain and she found that the foetus was aborted and to her shock, it was a male foetus, said Dr Jagadish, District Health Officer. District health authorities visited the nursing centre on Saturday and found many lacunae in its operations. The scanning centre staff claimed that the couple had not come to their hospital and refuted the allegations levelled against the scanning centre.
—***Salar News***

FIR filed against illegal installation of banners in City

BENGALURU, 11 MAY

An FIR has been lodged against individuals responsible for illegally installing banners at Banashankari in Padmanabhanagar Assembly constituency. Banners, displaying "Happy Birthday Shri Karthik Venkatesa Murthy," were placed on a public property near Deve Gowda Petrol Station Circle, MK Puttalingaiah Road.BBMP said such unauthorized banners are a violation of Defacement of Property Act. Citizens are urged to report any sightings of illegal banners or displays to the corporation's WhatsApp number 94806 85700, providing location details,photographic evidence. -SalarNews

Dug-up roads, rains leave Bengalureans in trouble

BBMP gives agencies time till 20 May to end desilting works

BENGALURU, 11 MAY

With City receiving heavy rains over the last couple of days, dug-up roads are giving a torrid time to Bengalureans.

Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), which initially set a deadline of May 10 for the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) and Bangalore Electricity Supply Company (BESCOM) to complete road cutting or maintenance works, has now extended the deadline to May 20 due to pending works.

Motorists are encountering safety risks while navigating through unpaved roads during downpours. "The dug-up roads in Thalaghattapura are a nightmare. Just when we hoped the rain would bring relief from the heat, it created a muddy mess. There's always a risk of falling or vehicles slipping," said M Rajesh, a resident of Thalaghattapura.

Priya P, a resident of Gottigere, said: "The roads are always chaotic during monsoon season, but this year it's even worse because of the road works. The overflowing rainwater mixes with the mud from the dug-up roads, making it filthy and hazardous."

S Ranganath Poojary a resident of Ganganagar, said: "Residents in RT Nagar areas such as MLA Layout, Gangenhalli (Ganganagar), Dinnur, Sultanpalya and Kanakanagar are the worst affected as desilting and other civic works are incomplete and roads are battered. The contractor has not been paid his dues and is delaying the work. We urge BBMP to speed up the work as school and colleges are about to resume and the children will find it hard to commute."

Mysore Road sees heavy traffic jam on Saturday due to heavy rainfall in City ***PHOTO: SALAR***

Rain delayed work: BBMP Chief

BBMP Chief Commissioner Tushar Giri Nath told Salar News that the rain makes it harder to work because the ground is wet, and the drains are blocked. "Our biggest concern is that clogged drains can be dangerous for vehicles and pedestrians. Unforeseen underground utility conflicts and relocation issues have hampered progress on some projects," Nath said.

The BBMP Chief Commissioner said they have requested BWSSB and BESCOM to finish road works by 20 May to maintain a clean drainage system throughout the rainy season. "We have completed 80 percent of the road works and are looking forward to completing the rest by 20 May," he said. The roads that are undergoing works are RT Nagar main road, Yelenahalli main road, Shivananda flyover, Richmond Circle, Thalaghattapura main road and Gottigere service road, among others.

BBMP has also urged citizens to cooperate by clearing any construction debris or waste materials from roadsides. "Such blockages can hinder the free flow of rainwater and cause inconvenience," Nath said.

The civic body has intensified its cleaning efforts. "Every third week of the month will be dedicated to intensive cleaning, and all officials have been instructed to participate," Nath said.

—*Salar News*

Siddaramaiah enjoys Maddur vade while returning to Bengaluru from Mysuru on Saturday ***PHOTO: SALAR***

Modi is master of lies, exploits people emotionally: CM

MYSURU, 11 MAY

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Saturday called Prime Minister Narendra Modi a master of lies and alleged he did not fulfill any of the promises he made.

He claimed that people had realised that Modi spoke lies and exploits them emotionally.

Reacting to the Prime Minister's statement that the Opposition wanted to bury him, Siddaramaiah said no one wants to make his graveyard. Instead, they are opposing him politically.

"He (Modi) had been Prime Minister for the past 10 years. He did nothing for the poor. In addition to it, there are allegations that he is a 'master of lies' (Sullina Sardara) because he did not fulfill any of the promises he made," Siddaramaiah said.

Other than defeating Prime Minister, no one wants to build his graveyard, he explained.

Prime Minister Modi on Friday said at Nandurbar in Maharashtra that some in the Opposition want to bury him alive and claimed the people of the country were his security shield and they won't let any harm come to him.

Siddaramaiah said the Opposition will always wish to defeat him politically because the country did not develop under him and the condition of the poor has not improved.

Siddaramaiah said the people have understood Prime Minister and claimed that he has been exposed. He said those who have gone up will have to come down. —*PTI*

BJP leader Devaraje taken to Holenarasipura in rape case

CHITRADURGA, 11 MAY

BJP leader and advocate G Devaraje Gowda, arrested for alleged molestation and rape, was on Saturday taken to Holenarasipura in Hassan district, where the incident had allegedly taken place, for questioning, police said.

An FIR was registered against Gowda on a complaint by a 36-year-old woman from Hassan district, who alleged that he molested and raped her on the pretext of helping her sell her property. A case of molestation was registered against Gowda on 1 April. On Friday, the woman once again approached police and alleged that she was also raped by him, a police officer told PTI.

BJP leader was arrested at Gulihal toll gate by Hiriyur Police. Gowda had unsuccessfully contested the 2023 Assembly election on the BJP ticket and was defeated by JD(S) MLA and former minister HD Revanna. He had also claimed that he alerted the BJP leadership last year about Prajwal Revanna's alleged sexual abuse of several women, and cautioned the saffron party not to give a LS ticket to JD(S) MP. —*PTI*

Devaraje Gowda ***PHOTO: PTI***

RJP leader Nagesh detained for offering reward on Prajwal info

BENGALURU, 11 MAY

Rajya Janata Party (RJP) leader N Nagesh has been detained for offering a reward for information about the whereabouts of Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna in connection with the obscene video case, police said. The campaign, initiated in Bengaluru, Karnataka, promised a reward of Rs 1 lakh for information on Revanna's location. However, authorities swiftly intervened, detaining Nagesh and removing the posters. Meanwhile, Revanna remains elusive despite the FIR registered against him several days ago. —ANI

Why not cancel Prajwal's diplomatic passport: Jairam

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

Congress General Secretary Jairam Ramesh on Saturday asked the government what is stopping it from cancelling the diplomatic passport of suspended JD(S) MP Prajwal Revanna, who is accused of sexual abuse.

The 33-year-old Hassan MP reportedly flew to Germany soon after the Karnataka State Commission for Women chairperson Nagalakshmi Chowdhary wrote to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to order a probe into the sexual allegations against him after scores of explicit videos and pictures went viral on social media.

In a post on X, Ramesh questioned how Prajwal was allowed to escape. "What is stopping the PM from having the diplomatic passport to Prajwal Revanna cancelled? How and why was he allowed to flee the country like Vijay Mallya, Nirav Modi, and Mehul Choksi were?" the Congress leader asked.

Prajwal, the grandson of Janata Dal (Secular) patriarch and former prime minister HD Deve Gowda, has been accused of sexual assault after several videos allegedly featuring him with multiple women surfaced. —*PTI*

'GROW A SPINE, EC'

Several civil society and citizen groups sent hundreds of postcards to Election Commission of India demanding the polling body to grow a spine or resign under 'Grow a Spine' campaign. The citizens have slammed EC for "inaction" over violations of Model Code of Conduct and laws during Lok Sabha elections ***PHOTO: SALAR***

Man who chopped off minor's head held in Madikeri forest

MADIKERI, 11 MAY

A 32-year-old man, who allegedly killed a minor girl after their proposed marriage was put off, was arrested on Saturday, police said.

The arrest comes two days after the 16-year-old girl was brutally killed by Prakash, who severed her head and took it along with him at Surlabbi village in Madikeri.

According to police, the girl had just completed her SSLC exams this year and her engagement was fixed with Prakash on Thursday. However, someone informed the Child Helpline number and officials from Child Welfare Department reached the girl, Meena's house and counselled both the families saying if they went ahead with the marriage, it would attract provisions of the POCSO Act and Child Marriage Act.

Both families agreed that only after Meena attained the age of 18 she would be married to Prakash. The officials and the groom's family then left.

However, at 5.30pm on Thursday, Prakash barged into Meena's house, kicked her father and assaulted her mother with a sharp-edged weapon, generally used for cutting trees. He then dragged the girl outside for about 100 metres, chopped off her head and fled the scene with it, SP Ramarajan K, told PTI.

—*Salar News*

WITHIN ONE MONTH

2 murders leave Banaswadi residents in worry

BENGALURU, 11 MAY

Two murders of rowdy sheeters within a span of a month have left the residents under Banaswadi police station limits in Sarvagnanagar constituency in shock and dismay. "There is absolutely no police control here. High on banned substances and carrying lethal weapons, these anti-social elements are having a free run in the area. We are scared to come out as we do not know when one gang would attack another and we would be caught in the melee," said Ashok Hegde, a senior citizen and resident of Oil Mill Road.

In the first murder on 27 March, Dinesh Kumar, a 34-year-old rowdy sheeter and a contract killer, was hacked to death at an Oyo room in Kammanahalli. Police have arrested 12 people, including Dilip Sagar alias Speed, in this murder case.

Kumar had come along with the accused to book a room for a day to plot the murder of Sagar. The suspects carried a bag with lethal weapons. Since the manager of the Oyo room insisted on cash payment the duo accompanying Kumar went out to a nearby ATM to fetch cash while Kumar sat in the lobby. Within minutes, five people who accompanied Kumar and another five whipped out machetes and hacked Kumar to death.

Police said the accused had double-crossed Kumar as they were offered money by Sagar and his associates. Sagar allegedly perceived a threat to his life from Kumar as the deceased had vowed to finish him off.

Police have nabbed Arvind, Dilip Sagar, Ajay Christopher, Nikhil alias Vicky, Gowtham, Darshan, Melvin, Karthik, Satish, Kishore, Diwakar and Sheka. Sagar and Ajay are notorious rowdy sheeters and have cases to their name in Kothanur, Ramamurthy Nagar and Banaswadi police stations.

In the second incident around 1am on Tuesday, the victim was Karthikeyan, alias P&T Karthik, a 40-year-old notorious rowdy who had entered the fray as a real-estate businessman. A six-member gang wielding machetes chased Karthikeyan and hacked him to death near his house at Ramaswamy Palya.

Police said Karthikeyan, who had a string of cases to his name in Banaswadi and Commercial Street police stations, had his rowdy sheeter name revoked by a City court two years ago based on his good conduct.

A rival gang in the vicinity had a dispute with him over a land deal and police suspect this to be the reason for the murder. Police have arrested Dharma, Ishaq and Sultan based on the CCTV footage and local intelligence on Thursday. Police are on the lookout for the prime accused who is also a rowdy sheeter.

—*Salar News*

The residents are shocked under Sarvagnagar constituency ***PHOTO: PTI***

- In the first murder on 27 March, Dinesh Kumar, a 34-year-old rowdy sheeter and a contract killer, was hacked to death at an Oyo room in Kammanahalli. In the second incident around 1am on Tuesday, the victim was Karthikeyan, alias P&T Karthik, a 40-year-old notorious rowdy who had entered the fray as a real-estate businessman

KAS officer's wife found dead; suicide suspected

BENGALURU, 11 MAY

Chaitra Gowda, a 34-year-old lawyer and wife of a KAS officer, was found dead in her house at Sanjay Nagar here on Friday.

The body was discovered by family members who resided on a different floor of the three-storey apartment. Police found a suicide note dated 11 March from the house. In the note, Chaitra expressed struggles with depression and took sole responsibility for her decision.

"My husband is good. Take good care of your daughter. I am suffering from depression. I tried hard to get out of it, (but couldn't) so I ended my life. Take good care of the baby and enjoy life. I know that committing suicide is wrong," the note said. —*Salar News*

BWSSB cracks down on discharge of waste water

BENGALURU, 11 MAY

In a bid to safeguard public health, Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has ramped up efforts to identify and address the unauthorised discharge of wastewater into sewers and rain canals. BWSSB Chairman Ram Prasath Manohar said to mitigate the detrimental impact of unauthorised wastewater discharge on public health, particularly during the rainy season, the civic body has been reviewing unauthorised connections since 24 April.

Conducting inspections at 17,793 sites across the City, authorities have detected 2,137 unauthorised connections, including 587 in apartments. While 260 contacts have applied for authorization, fines have been collected from 60 contacts, and demand notices issued to 149 others. Additionally, notices have been sent to 1,390 contacts to address the issue. Manohar urged the public to cooperate in regularising unauthorized connections voluntarily. Failure to comply may result in stricter measures being implemented from next week.

—*Salar News*

PHOTO: PTI

NIA searches 6 places in Jammu in Pak terror case

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Saturday conducted searches at six locations across Jammu province in Pakistan-backed conspiracy to spread terror in the region, an official statement said.Extensive searches were conducted in Doda, Ramban and Kishtwar districts of the region by the NIA teams in a case relating to the conspiracy by banned terrorist organisations and their offshoots to carry out violent attacks with sticky bombs, IEDs and small arms etc. in Jammu and Kashmir, the statement said.The searches have led to the seizure of incriminating material, including digital devices, documents etc. from premises linked with hybrid terrorists, overground workers (OGWs), sympathisers and cadres linked with the newly-formed offshoots and affiliates of proscribed terrorist outfits, it said. —*PTI*

WB job scam: TMC MLA withdraws plea from SC

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

Jailed TMC MLA Manik Bhattacharya has withdrawn from the Supreme Court his bail plea in a case related to alleged irregularities in the recruitment of primary school teachers in West Bengal. A bench comprising justices Bela M Trivedi and Pankaj Mithal allowed Bhattacharya to file a fresh plea with some additional documents before the High Court. Bhattacharya, a former chairperson of the West Bengal Board of Primary Education, was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on 11 October last year after night-long questioning. ED alleged the Palashipara MLA was not cooperating with the investigation. —*PTI*

Media ask EC to hold press meets on polling days

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

Media associations demanded on Saturday that the Election Commission hold press conferences after every voting phase of the ongoing Lok Sabha polls. Media associations Press Club of India, Indian Women Press Corps, Press Association, Foreign Correspondents Club and Delhi Union of Journalists also asked the poll authority to release the entire election data, including the absolute number of votes cast in each phase and percentage of voting, by the next day of the polling date. "It should be noted that at press conferences, the journalists get their doubts cleared which helps them and write error-free copy for their readers," the media associations said. —*PTI*

Guv must say why he is not stepping down, says Didi

SAPTAGRAM, 11 MAY

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Saturday slammed Governor CV Ananda Bose over allegations of molestation against him, and said he must explain why he should not step down. Addressing a poll rally here in support of TMC's Hooghly candidate Rachana Banerjee, the CM also asserted she would not step inside the Raj Bhavan till Bose remains the governor. "The governor says 'didigiri' (high-handedness) will not be tolerated...But, I say Governor, your 'dadagiri' will not work anymore," the TMC supremo said. A contractual woman employee of the Raj Bhavan had last week lodged a complaint with the Kolkata Police, alleging that she was molested by Bose in the governor's house on 24 April and 2 May. Bose had screened many footage of the Raj Bhavan on 9 May. —*PTI*

Cong will not even win 50 seats: PM

He claims Cong will not get Oppn status

PHULBANI/BOLANGIR/BARGARH (ODISHA), 11 MAY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday claimed that Congress will not win even 50 seats in the Lok Sabha elections and will not be able to get the Opposition party status after the polls.

Addressing election rallies in Kandhamal, Bolangir and Bargarh Lok Sabha seats, Modi claimed that Odisha's 'asmita' (pride) is in danger and BJP will protect it, while asserting that a "double engine" government of the saffron party will be formed in the state and a "son or daughter of the soil who understands Odia language and culture" will be made the Chief Minister.

Attacking BJD, he called for ousting from power "those responsible for keeping people poor despite the state having bountiful natural resources".

"Congress will not be able to get 10 per cent seats to become principal Opposition in the Lok Sabh," Modi claimed.

Taking a dig at Rahul Gandhi, without taking his name, he said, "Congress 'shehzade' has been reading out the same script since the 2014 polls... mark my words, NDA will break all records and will win over 400 seats this time."

The 'shehzade' tearing a document of the Manmohan Singh cabinet was an insult to the Constitution, Modi said, referring to the 2013 incident.Recalling the achievements of the previous BJP government at the Centre under Atal Bihari Vajpayee, he said that on this day 26 years ago, Pokhran tests were conducted (in 1998), and it enhanced the image of the country across the globe. "Congress always tries to scare the people of India... due to this tendency, Jammu and Kashmir witnessed terrorism for so many years. Instead of giving befitting reply to terrorists, Congress used to hold talks with them to protect the party's vote bank," he alleged.

"The Vajpayee government, on the other hand, showed to the world how India can ensure its security. Non-resident Indians felt proud of the moment (Pokhran tests)... that day India showed its capability to the world," he said.He also asserted that his government ended 500 years of people's wait by building Ram temple in Ayodhya. —*PTI*

> Congress always tries to scare the people of India... due to this tendency, Jammu and Kashmir witnessed terrorism for so many years. Instead of giving befitting reply to terrorists, Congress used to hold talks with them to protect the party's vote bank
>
> -Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

Difficult for PM to form govt: Kharge

Kharge question inaction against Adani

PATNA, 11 MAY

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday claimed that it will be "extremely difficult" for Prime Minister Narendra Modi to form the next government in the country.

Addressing a press conference here, along with Bihar allies Dipankar Bhattacharya, who heads the CPI (ML) L, and Manoj Kumar Jha of the RJD, Kharge also said the PM's speeches, of late, have been "devoid of the earlier spark".

"I was addressing rallies in Andhra Pradesh when Modi was in adjoining Telangana. The bluster ('abhiman') and pride ('garv') that characterised his speeches in the past were missing," said Kharge.

"After three phases of Lok Sabha polls, I can safely say it is going to be extremely difficult for Modi to become the Prime Minister again - a reason why he has given up speaking about achievements of his 10 years in power and is trying to create a Hindu-Muslim divide," the Congress Chief alleged.

He also slammed Mod for holding out an olive branch to former BJP ally in Maharashtra Uddhav Thackeray and NCP founder Sharad Pawar "in a language unbecoming of a prime minister".

He also lashed out at Modi, questioning why did his government not take any action if, as per his allegation, industrialists Mukesh Ambani and Gautam Adani were sending black money to the grand old party.

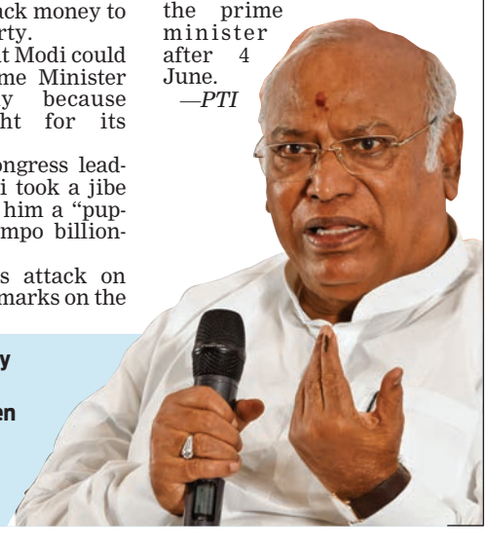
He asserted that Modi could become the Prime Minister of India only because Congress fought for its Independence.

Meanwhile, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi took a jibe at Modi, calling him a "puppet king" of "tempo billionaires".

Continuing his attack on Modi over his remarks on the Congress receiving "cash loaded in tempos" from "Adani and Ambani", the former Congress president also shared on X a video containing some excerpts from his speech at an event in Lucknow on Friday.

Along with video he posted in Hindi, "Narendra Modi is not a Prime Minister, he is a king. A 'puppet king' whose strings are in the hands of 'tempo billionaires'."

Also, Rahul on Saturday claimed the storm of INDIA bloc is everywhere and Narendra Modi will not be the prime minister after 4 June. —*PTI*



> I can safely say it is going to be extremely difficult for Modi to become the Prime Minister again - a reason why he has given up speaking about achievements of his 10 years in power and is trying to create a Hindu-Muslim divide
>
> -Mallikarjun Kharge, Congress President

PoK belongs to India, asserts Shah

HYDERABAD, 11 MAY

In a scathing attack on Congress and its leaders, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday said due to the fear of Pakistan having an atom bomb, the grand old party wants to give up India's rights over Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir.

Shah, who addressed election rallies at Vikarabad and Nagarkurnool in Telangana on the last day of campaigning for Lok Sabha polls in the state, recalled that former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee had conducted nuclear tests at Pokhran on this day in 1998 and made the country a nuclear power.

Congress does not have the courage to conduct surgical strike and airstrikes, he alleged.

Shah said Prime Minister Narendra Modi undertook surgical strikes and air strikes within 10 days after Pakistan terrorists attacked the country and finished them.

On AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge's alleged comments as to what Telangana people have to do with Kashmir, Shah said the Telangana youth can give their life for Kashmir.

Amit Shah PHOTO: PTI

- Referring to Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's comments on surgical strikes, he asked, "Revanth Reddy, where did you keep your mind? You kept it in Italy?"

Modi has ended terror and naxalism in the country, he said.Referring to Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's comments on surgical strikes, he asked, "Revanth Reddy, where did you keep your mind? You kept it in Italy?".

Reddy on Friday claimed an intelligence failure in preventing the Pulwama incident. —*PTI*

'NDA needs over 400 seats to implement UCC'

BEGUSARAI, 11 MAY

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday said NDA needs to win more than 400 seats in the Lok Sabha polls to implement the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in the country and to construct a grand temple at the Krishna Janmasthan in Mathura.

Addressing an election rally in favour of senior BJP leader and Union Minister Giriraj Singh in Begusarai, Sarma slammed the Congress and its allies for "raising question mark" on Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

The UCC means having a common law for all citizens of the country that is not based on religion. Personal laws and laws related to inheritance, adoption and succession are likely to be covered by a common code.

Hitting out at Congress and its allies, Sarma said, "Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and RJD supremo, Lalu Prasad, did not attend Pran Pratishtha of the Ram Lalla at Ayodhya. Let me make it very clear that neither

Himanta Biswa Sarma PHOTO: PTI

Rahul nor Lalu will ever be able to visit Ram temple in Ayodhya ..."Assam Chief Minister accused Congress of giving religion-based reservation.NDA needs to win more than 400 seats in the Lok Sabha elections to save the quota granted to the OBCs, SCs and STs, he said.

Union Minister Giriraj Singh is seeking re-election from Begusarai Lok Sabha seat as the NDA nominee. Singh is pitted against Communist Party of India (CPI) candidate Awadhesh Rai, who is Mahagathbandhan's nominee.

Elections will be held in Begusarai, Darbhanga, Ujiarpur, Samastipur, Begusarai, Munger Lok Sabha seats of Bihar in the fourth phase on 13 May. —*PTI*

Mufti accuses J&K administration of trying to 'fix' LS elections

SRINAGAR, 11 MAY

PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on Saturday accused the Jammu and Kashmir administration of trying to "fix" the Lok Sabha elections by "selectively targeting and harassing" her party and its supporters.

Addressing a press conference at the PDP headquarters here, Mufti also alleged that the authorities have imposed restrictions for 48 hours from 6:30 pm on Saturday under Section 144 in Pulwama, which is part of the Srinagar Lok Sabha seat going to polls on Monday.

The PDP president said they were trying to "harass" the people so that they do not come out to vote.

The former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister also alleged that her party's active workers, who have been organising its meetings, have been detained ahead of the polling.

Mufti said the administration is not yet openly coming out in support of their proxies as they are waiting for the elections to conclude in two seats in Srinagar and Baramulla.

"The government officials are under pressure. The PDP workers are selectively targeted, they are harassed," she added.Mufti alleged the ruling BJP put several youth in jails. —*PTI*

3 MORE HELD IN LAND GRAB CASE LINKED TO SOREN

NEW DELHI/RANCHI, 11 MAY

Enforcement Directorate on Saturday said it has made three more arrests in connection with an alleged land grab linked money laundering case in which it had arrested former Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren and some others.

Sanjeet Kumar, Md. Irshad and Tapas Ghosh were taken into custody on 9 May under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), according to ED.

A total of 25 people, including Soren, IAS officer and former Ranchi deputy commissioner Chhavi Ranjan, former revenue department sub-inspector Bhanu Pratap Prasad and others have been arrested by the ED as part of this investigation.

Land parcels worth Rs 266 crore, including a clutch of plots acquired "illegally" by Soren in Ranchi, have been attached by the agency till now while three charge sheets have been filed following 64 searches and surveys conducted by it. —*PTI*

Varun's criticism cost him ticket: Maneka

SULTANPUR, 11 MAY

BJP leader Maneka Gandhi on Saturday indicated that her son Varun Gandhi's writings that were sometimes critical of the government may have cost him the party's Lok Sabha ticket from Pilibhit but asserted that he would do very well even without it.

In an exclusive interview with PTI at her residence here, the former Union minister and BJP's Sultanpur candidate also said Varun Gandhi wants to come and campaign for her but a decision on that hasn't been taken yet.

Maneka Gandhi & Varun Gandhi PHOTO PTI

The Sultanpur seat in Uttar Pradesh goes to polls on 25 May in the sixth round of the seven-phase general elections. Polling was held in Pilibhit in the first phase on 19 April. —*PTI*

On Varun Gandhi being denied a ticket and if she felt bad as a mother, Maneka Gandhi said, "Well I can't say I was delighted but I am sure Varun will do very well even without a ticket."

Asked about calls from Pilibhit that he should have been fielded from there this time also, she said, "Yes, he should have been there but the party has taken a decision and that's it.

The eight-time MP also asserted that in her elections she only talks about local issues.

Congress leader backtracks on 2 wives remark after BJP flak

Bhopal, 11 May

Former Union minister and Congress' Lok Sabha candidate from Ratlam in Madhya Pradesh, Kantilal Bhuria, who has courted a controversy with his "two wives" remark, has clarified that he passed the comment sarcastically in response to a tribal man's query. Bhuria on Thursday kicked up a row by claiming that men with two wives stand to gain Rs 2 lakh under his party's Mahalaxmi scheme to give Rs 1 lakh annually to poor women. The statement drew a sharp response from BJP, which sought action from Election Commission of India against Bhuria. —*PTI*

JAGAN VS SHARMILA

Pulivendula turns battleground for siblings

PULIVENDULA, 11 MAY

This nondescript town in Andhra Pradesh's arid Rayalaseema region has long been the unquestioned bastion of the state's powerful Reddy clan.

But as voters gear up for crucial assembly and parliamentary polls on 13 May, all eyes are on the high-stakes battle in Pulivendula, an assembly constituency that has been a Reddy family stronghold for over four decades.

Late Chief Minister, the iconic YS Rajasekhara Reddy won the seat for the first time in 1978 on a Congress ticket. Since then, members of his family have consecutively emerged victorious in 13 elections, including three by-polls.

YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, the incumbent chief minister and head of the ruling YSR Congress Party, is vying for a hat-trick win here. But his path to victory has been obstructed by none other than his estranged sister, YS Sharmila Reddy.Sharmila, who recently merged her YSR Telangana Party with the Congress, has thrown down the gauntlet against her brother.

Contesting from the Kadapa parliamentary seat, which encompasses Pulivendula among its seven assembly segments, she has vowed to unseat Jagan from their hometown turf and dislodge his party from power in Andhra Pradesh.The faceoff has infused the electoral contest with an intense personal dimension, setting the stage for a fierce battle as Sharmila challenges her brother's formidable political legacy built on the pro-poor, farmer-friendly image of their late father, Rajasekhara Reddy. —*PTI*

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar campaign for Kadapa candidate YS Sharmila in Andhra on Saturday PHOTO: SALAR

BJP ridiclues RaGa for not contesting from Amethi

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

BJP on Saturday made light of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's readiness for a debate with Prime Minister Narendra Modi as it questioned his knowledge of issues and his standing, noting that he is neither the President of his party nor the leader of the Opposition.

Addressing a press conference, BJP Spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi also took a swipe at Gandhi over his claim that the opposition INDIA bloc will win the Lok Sabha polls, saying someone who could not file his nomination from Amethi is speaking about forming government at the Centre.

"Phenomenon thy name is Rahul Gandhi," he said mockingly.Gandhi, who lost Amethi to Irani in the 2019 general elections, has this time been fielded by the Congress from Rae Bareli and is contesting against BJP's Dinesh Pratap Singh. Gandhi family aide Kishori Lal Sharma is taking on Irani in Amethi.

Trivedi asked that in what capacity is Gandhi looking to debate with Modi as he is merely an MP of his party.In the Congress, one MP heads a yatra while its leaders in both the Houses of Parliament stand behind him. While Mallikarjun Kharge is its president, Gandhi's posters are visible, he said, jeering at the opposition party. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Death toll in MP road accident rises to 6 as 3 more die

SEHORE, 11 MAY

The death toll in the road accident at Salkanpur in Madhya Pradesh's Sehore district rose to six after three more people succumbed to their injuries during treatment, police said on Saturday. The six deceased include two elderly couples, they said. Three people were killed o the spot and nine injured after their sports utility vehicle (SUV) hit a divider while coming down a road from a temple in Salkanpur Friday evening, the police said. "Three more people succumbed to their injuries at a hospital in Narmadapuram on Friday night, taking the toll to six in this accident," Rehti police station's sub-inspector Nandram Ahirwar said. The six deceased include two couples - Sharda Prasad Pandey,72, and his wife Aprna Pandey ,60, Rajendra Pandey,70, and his wife Usha Pandey besides Pushpalata Awasthi,85, and driver Laxminarayan Chowkse.—*PTI*

Minor girl raped by 2, thrown under trolley in Bareilly

BAREILLY, 11 MAY

A minor girl was allegedly raped by two youths in the Faridpur police station area of Bareilly, police said on Saturday. The minor's health deteriorated after the alleged crime as she fell unconscious, the police said, adding that the accused tied her hands and legs and threw her under a trolley before fleeing the scene. The police reached the spot after receiving word of the alleged crime and rescued the minor from under the trolley. It took a long time for the minor to regain consciousness, the police informed, adding that she narrated her ordeal to her family members. A complaint was registered against the accused, the police informed.—*ANI*

Ex-employer kills woman for not returning to work

JALNA, 11 MAY

A 40-year-old woman was stabbed to death, and her son sustained injuries in an attack by her former employer in Maharashtra's Jalna district, police said on Saturday. The police have arrested the accused, Ganesh Katakde,45, for the attack that occurred in the Ramnagar area on Friday night, an official said. The victim, Subhidra Vaidya, had recently quit her job at the accused's restaurant, but the latter kept harassing her to return to work, he said. Katakde arrived at Vaidya's house in an inebriated state and asked her to return to work, and when she refused, he allegedly attacked her with a knife, the official said. The woman's son Sachin,20, also sustained injuries when he tried to save her.—*PTI*

Car-truck collision in UP kills 4 including groom

JHANSI, 11 MAY

A groom among four people were killed and two others injured in a collision between a car and truck near Parichha area here. The accident happened on Jhansi-Kanpur national highway on Friday night when six people, including the groom, were on their way to the wedding venue in a car, they said. Superintendent of Police Gyanendra Kumar said that a wedding procession was coming from Bilati village to Chhapra village when a truck hit the car from behind. After the accident, the CNG tank of the car caught fire and exploded, police said. A fire brigade reached the spot on getting and controlled the blaze. However, by that time four people, including the groom, had died due burn injuries, they said.—*PTI*

TMC seeks to brief Prez on Sandeshkhali

TMC accuses BJP of misguiding the President

NEW DELHI, 10 MAY

The Trinamool Congress on Saturday said it has become imperative for the party to apprise President Droupadi Murmu of the true unfolding of incidents at Sandeshkhali which had led to narratives and counter-narratives between the ruling party and the BJP.

West Bengal minister and TMC leader Shashi told reporters here that it is surprising that the BJP had taken a team from Sandeshkhali in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district and gave a "false portrayal" to none other than the President of the country.

"I feel there is a need to take a team from Sandeshkhali on our behalf and apprise the President of what had happened actually on the ground. We will seek the go-ahead from our top leadership for this", she said.

"The BJP team which had met the President had misguided her. The saffron camp is resorting to lies every now and then. Now we have to follow the right protocol to meet the President if our top leadership gives its approval in this regard", she said.

President Droupadi Murmu with NCW Chairperson Rekha Sharma during a meeting where she received a report on Sandeshkhali **PHOTO: X**

The BJP had levelled allegations against local Trinamool Congress leaders of Sandeshkhali that they had committed sexual harassment of women in the region. This had been refuted by the Trinamool Congress saying that this was a false narrative of the BJP and the saffron camp had allegedly paid money to women of Sandeshkhali to make "these false allegations".

A purported sting video, the authenticity of which was not verified by PTI, surfaced recently which showed the local BJP leader Gangadhar Koyal admitting that BJP had paid money to women of Sandeshkhali to make false allegations of sexual harassment.

"The BJP has stooped so low that the party has demeaned the prestige of women. They will get a befitting reply in the elections", Panja said.

She also alleged that the chairperson of the National Commission for Women (NCW) was also "involved in the conspiracy of the BJP at Sandeshkhali" and the Trinamool Congress will register a complaint against her with the Election Commission.

—*PTI*

Kerala CM's trip: Guv 'thanks' media for informing him

NEW DELHI, 10 MAY

Days after Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan embarked on a three-week-long foreign tour, Governor Arif Mohammed Khan on Saturday expressed his displeasure over not being informed about the trip and "thanked" the media for letting him know about it.

When the media sought his reaction about the foreign trip of the Chief Minister and his family, Khan sarcastically thanked the media and said at least they had informed him about it.

"I am not aware...Thank you very much for informing me... At least you have informed me," the Governor told reporters in nearby Aluva.

Khan said he had earlier written to the President of India that the Raj Bhavan was

PHOTO: X

"kept in the dark" about such foreign visits.

Vijayan and his close family members left for various foreign destinations on 6 May.

While the opposition Congress and BJP had accused Vijayan of keeping the details of the foreign trip a "secret" and sought to know who was the sponsor, the ruling CPI(M) strongly came in support of Vijayan and justified his family tour.

—*PTI*

Kareena gets notice for naming book title after Bible

JABALPUR, 11 MAY

The Madhya Pradesh High Court has issued a notice to Bollywood actor Kareena Kapoor on a petition seeking the removal of the word "Bible" from the title of her book, "'Kareena Kapoor Khan's Pregnancy Bible: The Ultimate Manual for Moms-To-Be", as it hurt sentiments of the Christian community.

The single bench of Justice GS Ahluwalia on Thursday issued the notice on a petition filed by advocate Christopher Anthony.

The court also issued notices to co-author Aditi Shah Bhimjyani, Amazon Online Shopping, publisher Juggernaut Books, the state government, and two cops

—*PTI*

SC grants bail to ex-cop in encounter case

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

The Supreme Court has granted bail to former Mumbai Police officer Pradeep Sharma, awarded life sentence in the 2006 fake encounter killing case of gangster Ramnarayan Gupta alias Lakkhan Bhaiya..

A bench of Justices Hrishikesh Roy and Prashant Kumar Mishra noted the submission of the lawyer for the Maharashtra government that the state had no objection to the court granting bail to Sharma.

Senior advocates Mukul Rohatgi and Sidharth Luthra appeared for Sharma, while

Pradeep Sharma **PHOTO: PTI**

- The Supreme Court has granted bail to former Mumbai Police officer Pradeep Sharma

senior advocate R Basant represented the complainant and opposed the former officer's bail application.

The top court had earlier on 8 April said he need not surrender till further orders to undergo the life sentence awarded to him in the case.

While admitting Sharma's appeal against the 19 March Bombay High Court verdict, the bench had said, "It is a case of reversal of acquittal by the High Court, where the appeal is filed by the appellant. The statutory appeal is admitted for hearing Issue notice on bail plea. The High Court has directed him for surrender in three weeks. —*PTI*

A 26-year-old man died in the state capital after he was brutally assaulted with sticks and bricks **PHOTO: PIXABAY**

Kerala man assaulted with sticks & bricks, dies

T'PURAM, 11 MAY

- The victim -- Akhil -- succumbed to his injuries at the Thiruvananthapuram Medical College hospital on Friday night, police said

A 26-year-old man died in the state capital after he was brutally assaulted with sticks and bricks allegedly by a group of men near Karamana here, police said on Saturday.

The victim -- Akhil -- succumbed to his injuries at the Thiruvananthapuram Medical College hospital on Friday night, police said.

A case under Sections 302 (murder), 324 (voluntarily causing hurt by dangerous weapons or means), 341(wrongful restraint) and 34 (common intention) of the IPC has been lodged against the three accused who are still at large.

Police said an investigation has been launched and it was actively searching for the three accused who have been identified with the help of the CCTV visuals of the assault.

The CCTV visuals of the attack, aired on TV channels, showed three men repeatedly and brutally attacking the victim with sticks and bricks even after he fell to the ground.

According to the FIR, the three arrived there in a car to attack the victim.

The FIR also states there was previous enmity between the accused and the victim as they had got into an argument a few days ago at a bar.

Police suspect that previous enmity may be the reason for the attack.

—*PTI*

CHAR DHAM DEVOTEES STUCK

Char Dham Yatra devotees visiting Yamunotri temple in faced massive crowds and long queues for over two hours on the hills due to poor safety and crowd management by the authorities. The rush occurred on Saturday after the temple's doors were opened for devotees **PHOTO: SCREENGRAB**

76 Indian troops replaced by HAL workers in Maldives

MALE, 11 MAY

Maldives Minister of Foreign Affairs Moosa Zameer on Saturday said 76 Indian military personnel were replaced by civilian employees of the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited which manufactured the helicopters gifted by India, thus also ending the suspense over the exact number of those repatriated.

The Indian military personnel, stationed in the Maldives to operate two platforms for helicopters and a Dornier aircraft used primarily for medical evacuations, were repatriated by Friday, as per the 10 May deadline set following an agreement between the two countries in February in New Delhi.

That agreement was a result of the demand of pro-China President Mohamed Muizzu made within hours of his assuming office in November.

Local media reports on Saturday quoted Zameer addressing a press conference a day after he returned from his first official visit to India, detailing the presence of Indian soldiers stationed in Hanimaadhoo, Kadhdhoo and Gan.

"As many as 26 soldiers withdrew from Gan between 7 and 9 March, while another 25 soldiers withdrew from Hanimaadhoo between 7 and 9 April, and 12 withdrew from Kadhdhoo on Tuesday. The final batch of 13 soldiers withdrew from Kadhdhoo on Thursday," news portal Sun.mv reported, quoting Zameer as saying.The Maldivian government had previously said that documents show there are 89 Indian soldiers in the Maldives, to operate two military helicopters and a Dornier aircraft, it added. Zameer said that it is the civilian employees of the company that manufactured the Indian-gifted helicopters, the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) that have come to replace the Indian military personnel

—*PTI*

NAXALITES MIXED WITH VILLAGERS DURING ENCOUNTER

BIJAPUR 10 MAY

Some Naxalites changed into civilian clothes to pose as villagers and mislead the police after the first exchange of fire with the security personnel during Friday's encounter in Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh, an official said.

According to the police, 12 Naxalites were gunned down by security personnel in a 12-hour operation in the forest near Pidia village under the Gangloor police station limits on Friday.Their bodies were brought to Bijapur district headquarters on Saturday morning."The identity of the deceased has been ascertained. They were carrying a cumulative reward of Rs 31 lakh on their heads," Police said. —*PTI*

PADMA SHRI AWARDEE

Punjabi poet, writer Surjit Patar dies at 79

LUDHIANA, 11 MAY

PHOTO: FACEBOOK

Padma Shri recipient Punjabi poet Surjit Patar passed away on Saturday morning at his residence near the Barewal Colony here. He was 79.

Patar died in his sleep, his family members said.

Many political leaders, including Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, expressed grief over the demise of Patar and said it is a big loss for the Punjabi literary community.

Patar's poetic works include 'Hawa Vich Likhe Harf', 'Hanere Vich Sulagdi Varanmala', 'Patjhar Di Pazeb', 'Lafzaan Di Dargah' and 'Surzameen'.

He received the Padma Shri in the field of literature and education in 2012. Patar was the president of the Punjab Arts Council. He had also been the president of the Punjabi Sahit Akademi.

The poet and writer has been awarded with the Sahitya Akademi Award, Panchnad Puruskar, Saraswati Samman and the Kusumagraj Literary award. —*PTI*

TRIPURA FACES FUEL CRISIS AS TRAIN SERVICES HIT

AGARTALA, 11 MAY

Tripura is facing a fuel crisis as goods train services to the northeastern state have not yet been restored, an official of the Food and Civil Supplies department said on Saturday.

The goods train service to the state stopped on 26 April after derailment of a goods train in Assam's Jatinga area but the passenger train service remains unaffected.

"The fuel crisis remains as it was earlier. The petrol crisis is severe as goods trains are not coming to the state since 26 April. We don't know when the track will be ready for resumption of goods train service fully," Director of Food and Civil Supplies department, Nirmal Adhikari said.

The state government started rationing petrol and diesel for two-wheelers, cars and commercial vehicles from 30 April.

A notification issued by the state government said two-wheelers and three-wheelers would get petrol amounting to Rs 200 per day, while for four-wheelers it is Rs 500 per day. For buses and minibuses, it is 60 litres and 40 litres per day.

For 12 wheel, 10 wheel and six wheel trucks it is 80 litres, 60 litres and 45 litres per day respectively.Adhikari said the department has taken steps to increase oil tankers to bring more petrol from Guwahati and Silchar to tide over the crisis.

"Now, we are bringing 60 per cent of the state's total fuel demand by using oil tankers. If the railway line is not fully operational by next week, there will be shortage of essential items including rice", he said.

Adhikari said the department has sought police vigil at petrol pumps for proper distribution of petrol at petrol pumps.

The cops had to resort to lathi charge after some motorcyclists became violent after they failed to get petrol at a city-based fuel outlet on Thursday night.

—*PTI*

2 DEAD

Rain & thunders wreak havoc in Delhi

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

After days of heightened temperatures, Delhi-NCR witnessed a major thunderstorm, strong winds, and rainfall on Friday evening, causing traffic disruptions and flight diversion in the national capital.

At least two people were killed and 23 injured in storm-related incidents as strong winds uprooted trees, electricity poles and led to portions of walls collapsing across Delhi.

Power was also disrupted in many areas as the dust storm swept the national capital late Friday night.

Delhi airport sources said that due to bad weather, 9 flights heading to the city were diverted to Jaipur.

Traffic was also affected in the national capital and the adjoining areas as trees fell on the roads due to the gusty winds.

Several cars were also damaged in Sector 58 of Noida after a shuttering installed to repair a building fell on the vehicles.

The India Meteorological Department said that winds with over 50kmph reported in Delhi at 10pm on Friday. —*PTI/ANI*

Commuters on a road amid rainfall in Shimla, on Saturday; A road gets blocked as trees falls after a massive storm, in New Delhi **PHOTO: PTI/ANI**

2 dead, 6 injured after heavy rains lash Uttarakhand

Sirobagadh, 11 May

Two people were killed and six people sustained injuries as heavy rains created havoc near Peepal Kothi on the hilly areas of Uttarakhand and the Badrinath Highway.Seventeen more were injured due to building damage. The Badrinath-Rishikesh highway has been closed near Sirobagadh, due to which passengers going to Badrinath and Kedarnath have been stopped at Srikot-Srinagar and Kaliyasod.Srinagar Kotwal Hoshiyar Singh Pankholi said that care is being taken to ensure that passengers do not face any problems. Due to continuous debris falling in Sirobagadh, the road has not been opened yet. —*ANI*

THE AURORA EFFECT

A crimson glow lit up the dark sky in Ladakh. The aurora borealis glow on the horizon over Vienna. This is due to the strong solar magnetic storms launched towards Earth on 10 May
PHOTO: PTI

Has anything changed, ask voters in Lakhimpur Kheri

Locals say that even the traditional vote banks of political parties are looking for options ***PHOTO: ANI***

"Political leaders promised many things but has anything changed," asks Kamali Devi, who runs a small store in the Ghausina area.

This appears to be a common refrain in Uttar Pradesh's Lakhimpur Kheri Lok Sabha constituency where farmers want better prices for their produce and respite from the stray cattle menace and others want political leaders to talk about job creation instead of issues like the Ram temple and Article 370.

The district came into the spotlight in October 2021, when four Sikh farmers and a journalist were run over by an SUV in the Tikunia area.

Ashish Mishra alias Monu, the son of sitting Lakhimpur Kheri MP and Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Ajay Mishra 'Teni' was made an accused in the case.

Ashish Mishra is currently out on bail. The BJP has renominated Ajay Mishra from the seat.

Samajwadi Party (SP) has fielded Utkarsh Verma from the seat and the BSP has fielded Anshay Kalra.

Mishra enjoys popularity among the core upper caste voters in the constituency. His election campaign is focused on the development carried out in the region under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath have held multiple rallies to garner support for Ajay Mishra.

SP President Akhilesh Yadav and BSP supremo Mayawati have also held rallies in support of candidates of their parties.

Locals say that even the traditional vote banks of political parties are looking for options this time.

Ranvijay Pandey, a retired bank employee said, "The excitement of elections is missing this time. People have faced tough times in the past few years but they know who has steered the country through it and took it towards development."

On the BJP raising issues like the Ram temple, removal of Article 370 and triple talaq, Kamal Pal Singh, a garment shop salesman, said, "All these issues, have not given me a job. I am turning 35 and still do not have a permanent job."

> There is no air connectivity and rail connectivity with important cities is also limited. This hinders the growth of the tourism sector here despite its huge potential

Lakhimpur Kheri has over 18.6 lakh voters. Of these, around 7 lakh voters belong to Kurmi and other OBC communities. There are 2.5 lakh Dalit voters, 3 lakh Brahmins, 2.65 lakh Muslims and around 1 lakh Sikhs, according to internal surveys of political parties.

Some farmer groups are upset with the BJP for renominating Ajay Mishra.

"Naming a person whose son is accused of running over farmers with his vehicle as the candidate from the Lakhimpur seat is nothing but a slap on the face of farmers and the family members of those who were killed that day. We would urge the people of Lakhimpur to respond to this injustice," said Kulwant Singh, an office bearer of the Kisan Union (Tikait).

Also known as Uttar Pradesh's sugar bowl, Lakhimpur Kheri is known for its sugarcane production.

Farmers here have various concerns.

"We get Rs 6,000 annually from the government but that money is not enough to even procure fertiliser for one crop season. The cost of everything has increased but the prices we get for our produce have not," said Farzan Khan a farmer, from the Nighasan area who had come to the 'mandi' to sell 80 quintals of wheat.

For Deepak Mishra, another farmer at the mandi, the stray cattle menace is an issue.

"Everyone in BJP, from the block level leader to (Chief Minister) Yogi Adityanath and Prime Minister had promised that the issue of stray cattle would be resolved but the problem has only worsened over the years. Our entire time is spent keeping stray cattle out of our fields," he said.

Ashutosh Kumar, an office bearer of the local hotel association, wants better connectivity for Lakhimpur Kheri.

"There is no air connectivity and rail connectivity with important cities is also limited. This hinders the growth of the tourism sector here despite its huge potential," he said.

The Lakhimpur Kheri constituency has five assembly seats -- Palia, Nighasan, Gola Gokarnath, Sri Nagar and Lakhimpur. The BJP won all the seats in the 2022 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections.

When contacted, Ajay Mishra 'Teni' refused to comment on the elections.

SP candidate Utkarsh Verma claimed the BJP has lost ground among the poor, farmers, traders and backwards due to its policies.

"These groups are with the INDIA alliance and will oust the BJP from here," he said.

BSP's Anshay Kalra exuded confidence that he would win the seat.

"The people of the district are tired of the BJP's loot. They also remember the goonda raj of the SP government and are choosing the BSP this time to safeguard their rights," he said.

Since 1998, the SP has won the Lakhimpur Kheri seat thrice, the BJP twice and the Congress once.

Polling in Lakhimpur Kheri will be held on 13 May, the fourth phase of the Lok Sabha elections. *—PTI*

SALAR ساڈھ

Athletes running 4-minute mile outlive general population

Athletes are found to live for 5 years extra ***PHOTO: UNSPLASH***

Athletes who run a mile in under four minutes are found to live for about five more years than their predicted life expectancy, according to a new study published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine.

Researchers tracked the longevity of the first 200 athletes ever to have run a mile (roughly about a kilometre-and-a-half) in under four minutes.

The athletes' 4-minute mile achievements spanned a period of 20 years from 1954 to 1974 and the runners came from 28 different countries across Europe, North America, Oceania and Africa.

The researchers, including those at the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute in Australia, found that these athletes outlived the general population by several years. On average, they were found to live nearly five years beyond their predicted life expectancy.

Further, the runners whose first successful attempt was in the 1950s were found to outlive the general population by nine years, while the runners having their first successful attempt in the 1960s and the 1970s were found to live 5.5 years and nearly 3 years longer than the general population, respectively.

The analysis also found that the average age of the surviving athletes was 77 years, while the average age of the dead athletes when they died was 73 years. All the 200 athletes were men, born from 1928 to 1955, and were aged about 23 years (on average) when they ran a mile under four minutes for the first time. The times ranged from 3:52.86 and 3:59.9 minutes.

The researchers said it has long been thought that exposing the body to bouts of extreme endurance exercise may push it too far and shorten life expectancy.

However, the latest findings challenge these notions, they said.

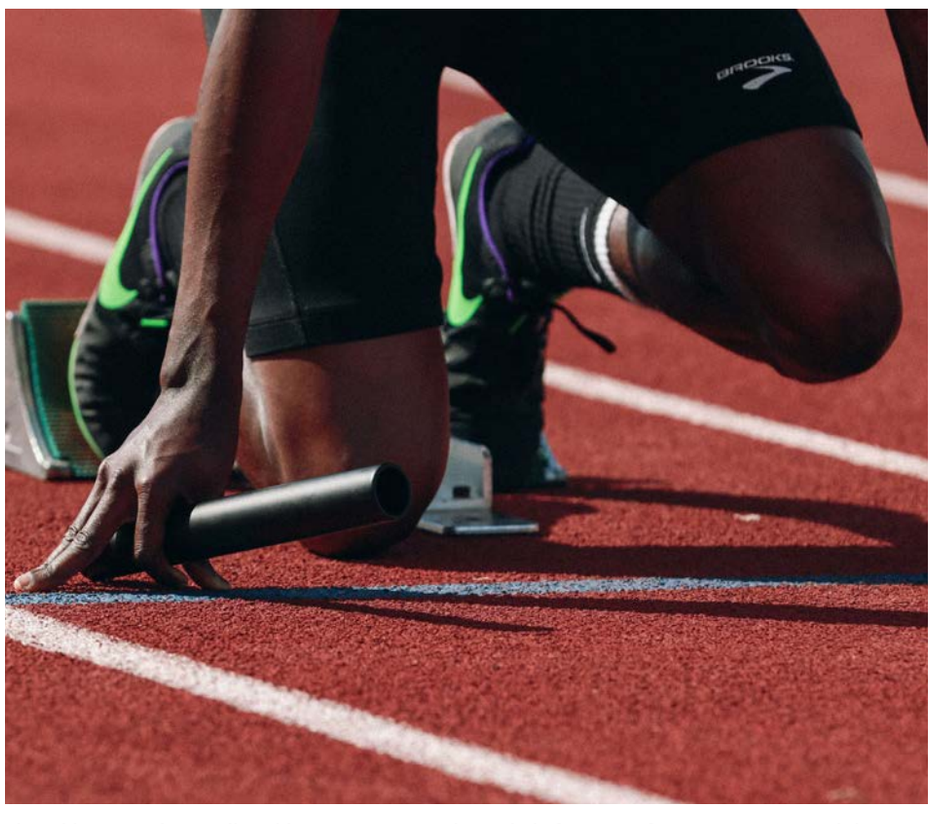
"This finding challenges the upper ends of the U-shaped exercise hypothesis (as it relates to longevity) and, once again, reiterates the benefits of exercise on the lifespan, even at the levels of training required for elite performance," the authors wrote.

They explained that the high aerobic and anaerobic requirements of running a mile necessitate putting in relatively high training volumes of around 9-12 hours or 120-170 kilometres a week.

While all this can mean pushing the body beyond its limits, particularly from an intensity perspective, this does not seem to affect lifespan, and if anything seems to prolong it, the researchers said.

They also acknowledged that a healthy lifestyle and genes may also have contributed, as 20 sets of brothers, including six sets of twins and father and son combinations, were among the first 200 runners to break the 4-minute mile.

The first person to achieve the feat was English neurologist and middle-distance athlete Roger Bannister on 6 May, 1954, to mark the 70th anniversary of which, the study was released, the authors said. *—PTI*



The athletes' 4-minute mile achievements spanned a period of 20 years from 1954 to 1974 and the runners came from 28 different countries ***PHOTO: UNSPLASH***

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Citizens remind Bihar leaders of forgotten vows on water crisis

Ganga Sagar pond in Darbhanga supports many fishers in the city and its surrounding areas ***PHOTO: DTE***

It is 9 am. Lalita Kumari, seated at her usual place in Darbhanga's fish market, stifles a yawn. In the utensil placed next to her, a Singhi (Heteropneustes fossilis) or Asian stinging catfish is writhing in the water. There is also dead catla or South Asian carp near her, which has come from West Bengal. A vehicle bearing political posters and blaring electoral promises passes by the market just then.

Lalita hears the noise and says sarcastically, "The fish are decreasing. Ponds are dying. But no politician is interested. If there is no water, there will neither be fish nor humans. If there is water, there is life."

Lalita's concern is not hers alone. Those whose livelihood is linked to water and who understand its importance, are raising the issue of constantly depleting water sources in Bihar.

Two organisations — Darbhanga-based Talab Bachao Abhiyaan (Save Pond Campaign) and the Indo-Nepal Kamla Maitri Manch — have jointly prepared and released a Jal-Jan (Water & people) Declaration in view of the ongoing 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

Darbhanga votes during the fourth phase of polling to be held on 13 May.

The Jal-Jan Declaration highlighted that water-related disasters in Bihar are mostly caused by floods and drought.

Embankments built to control floods since independence are now aggravating them in the state.The document has requested all political parties to include the issue of water conservation and reservoirs in their manifestos and address them.

Key takeaways

The document asks political leaders to ensure conservation of rivers, lakes, forests and wildlife; enact the Water Security Act and water policies; demarcate water bodies to protect them from encroachment and pollution and involve local people in any scheme related to water structures.

The geo-cultural diversity of rivers should be respected, it said. The dying rivers, chaur (wetlands) and lakes of an area should be revived before implementing river-interlinking policies; illegal and indiscriminate mining in rivers should be stopped. Green belts should be formed along rivers.

It further added that water flow should be taken into consideration during the construction of roads and railways. The use of mosquito nets or poison in ponds should be banned. A consortium should be formed to audit seven decade-old dam projects in Bihar. Also, details of public water bodies of all revenue villages should be prepared.

The Bihar government does not have any concrete policy and system regarding the conservation of water bodies. Encroachment is taking place on ponds right here in Darbhanga, which used to be known for them. Complainants are being murdered. But the administration and leaders remain silent.

North Bihar is drained by more than 200 streams, rivers and water courses that descend from the Nepal Himalayas. The region experiences flood-like conditions every year due to lack of better management. In southern Bihar, rivers start drying up as early as February-March and drought-like conditions take hold of the area around Gaya.

Water tankers are now seen in North Bihar during the summer. Darbhanga-based local journalist Shashi Mohan told DTE, "We never expected in our lives that a tanker would come to our neighbourhood in order to supply water. But water-surfeit areas like Darbhanga and Madhubani now face water scarcity in summers."

The magnitude of the water crisis can be gauged from the fact that the Bihar State Fisheries Cooperative Association recently said that there was a possibility that fish and makhana (foxnut) production would take a hit due to 90 per cent of Bihar's ponds drying up this year.

According to Rishikesh Kashyap, managing director of the Association, "Due to high temperatures and no rain in the month of April, the livelihood of fishers associated with Bihar's ponds is facing its biggest crisis yet. In such a situation, the government should provide free boring in 72,000 ponds."

North Bihar, once a pioneer in fish production, now buys fish from Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal due to the devastation of rivers, ponds and other water bodies in the state. Fishers are also left unemployed and are, in turn, forced to take up other professions which do not pay as much.

However, the issue of fishers turning to daily wage labour for survival is missing from the elections. Interestingly, the Vikassheel Insaan Party — which represents the Nishad community of fishers and boatmen — is in the fray in this election.

The incumbent National Democratic Alliance is also trying to woo the Nishads, who constitute nine per cent of Bihar's population. But the electoral campaigns of both sides do not broach upon either the safety of water bodies or the livelihoods of Nishads.

The Bihar government has indeed started the scheme on the orders of the Patna High Court. But even it has failed to rid ponds of encroachment. According to figures from the scheme, there are 1,15,022 ponds in Bihar at the moment. Of these, 46,566 are public ponds. Some 9,810 of these public ponds are encroached.

Most of Bihar's political parties have not issued any independent manifesto this time, with the exception of the Rashtriya Janata Dal. But even this document, titled 24 Janvachan, does not mention the conservation of water bodies. *—Courtesy Downtoearth*

PHOTO: X/ @MaureenSaysNo

Ban on female transgender athletes lifted

EAST MEADOW, 11 MAY

A New York judge on Friday struck down a Long Island county's order banning female transgender athletes after a local women's roller derby league challenged it. Judge Francis Ricigliano ruled that Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman didn't have the authority to issue his February executive order, which denies park permits to any women's and girl's teams, leagues or organizations that allow female transgender athletes to participate. Amanda Urena, President of the Long Island Roller Rebels, which challenged the order, said the decision sends a "strong message" against discrimination. The New York Civil Liberties Union, which filed the suit on behalf of the league, said the decision overturned a harmful policy that attempted to "score cheap political points by peddling harmful stereotypes about transgender women and girls." *—PTI*

Judge halts Biden plan to lower credit card fees

LOS ANGELES, 11 MAY

A federal judge in Texas temporarily halted a plan by the Biden administration to lower late fees on credit cards to USD 8 that was slated to go into effect next week. The temporary nationwide injunction imposed by Judge Mark Pittman in the Northern District of Texas is a win for the big banks and major credit card companies, which collect billions in revenue each year in late fees and were looking to stop the proposal from going into effect. It is also a win for the US Chamber of Commerce, which led the lawsuit on behalf of the banks. *—PTI*

Train hits boxcar in Buenos Aires, 90 injured

BUENOS AIRES, 11 MAY

At least 90 people were injured in Argentina's capital when a passenger train struck an empty boxcar on the tracks and derailed on Friday, authorities said, a rare collision that fuelled questions about basic safety. The train was on its way from Buenos Aires to the northern suburbs when it derailed around 10.30 am on a bridge in the trendy neighbourhood of Palermo, safety officials said. Union leaders opposed to libertarian President Javier Milei's economic austerity blamed the government for its failure to invest in public infrastructure. Dozens of injured were treated at the scene and 30 people taken to hospitals in moderate to serious condition, at least two by helicopter with chest trauma and broken bones. *—PTI*

Police arrest Peruvian Prez's brother, lawyer

LIMA, 11 MAY

Peruvian authorities arrested President Dina Boluarte's brother and her lawyer on Friday over influence-peddling accusations, a day after the South American country's government disbanded a police unit that assisted prosecutors in investigating the President's inner circle. A judge signed off on the arrests, according to a copy of the warrant obtained by The Associated Press. The document accuses the President's sibling of working to appoint government officials in exchange for money and an agreement to gather signatures to register a political party. The developments mark the mounting pressure on Boluarte, who became President in December 2022 when she replaced then-president Pedro Castillo. It also granted the prosecutors' request to keep both men incommunicado for 10 days. *—PTI*

Israel breaches international law: US

US says that there is not enough evidence to link US-supplied weapons to violations

WASHINGTON, 11 MAY

The Biden administration said on Friday that Israel's use of US-provided weapons in Gaza likely violated international humanitarian law but that wartime conditions prevented US officials from determining that for certain in specific airstrikes.

The finding of "reasonable" evidence to conclude that the US ally had breached international law protecting civilians in the way it conducted its war against Hamas was the strongest statement that the Biden administration has yet made on the matter. It was released in a summary of a report being delivered to Congress on Friday.

But the caveat that the administration wasn't able to link specific US weapons to individual attacks by Israeli forces in Gaza could give the administration leeway in any future decision on whether to restrict provisions of offensive weapons to Israel.

It comes after seven months of airstrikes, ground fighting and aid restrictions that have claimed the lives of nearly 35,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children.

While US officials were unable to gather all the information they needed on specific strikes, the report said that given Israel's "significant reliance" on US-made weapons, it was "reasonable to assess" that they had been used by Israel's security forces in instances "inconsistent" with its obligations under international humanitarian law. Israel's military has the experience, technology and know-how to minimise harm to civilians, but "the results on the ground, including high levels of civilian casualties, raise substantial questions as to whether the IDF is using them effectively in all cases", the report said.

International human rights groups and a review by an unofficial panel of former State and military officials, academic experts and others had pointed to more than a dozen Israeli airstrikes for which they said there were credible evidence of violations of the laws of war and humanitarian law.Targets included aid convoys, medical workers, hospitals, journalists, schools and refugee centeres and other sites that have broad protection under international law.

Israel says it is following all US and international law, that it investigates allegations of abuse by its security forces and that its campaign in Gaza is proportional to the existential threat it says is posed by Hamas. *—PTI*

Targets included aid convoys, schools, refugee centress and other sites that have protection under international law ***PHOTO: X/@KONABILL2023***

South Africa requests UN to restrain Israel

THE HAGUE, 11 MAY

South Africa urged the United Nations' top court Friday to issue more emergency measures to restrain Israel, saying its military incursion in Rafah threatens the "very survival of Palestinians in Gaza." The request marks the fourth for additional measures by South Africa, which filed a genocide case against Israel late last year at the International Court of Justice. According to the latest request, the previous preliminary orders by The Hague-based court were not sufficient to address "a brutal military attack on the sole remaining refuge for the people of Gaza." *—PTI*

Israel orders new evacuations in Rafah

RAFAH, 11 MAY

Israel ordered new evacuations in Gaza's southern city of Rafah on Saturday as it prepared to expand its operation, saying it was also moving into an area in northern Gaza where Hamas has regrouped.

Fighting is escalating across the enclave with heavy clashes between Israeli troops and Palestinian militants on the outskirts of Rafah, leaving the crucial nearby aid crossings inaccessible and forcing more than 110,000 people to flee north.

Israel's move into Rafah has so far been short of the full-scale invasion that it has planned.

The United Nations and other agencies have warned for weeks that an Israeli assault on Rafah, which borders Egypt near the main aid entry points, would cripple humanitarian operations and cause a disastrous surge in civilian casualties. More than 1.4 million Palestinians — half of Gaza's population — have been sheltering in Rafah, most after fleeing Israel's offensives elsewhere.

Heavy fighting is underway in Northern Gaza, where Hamas appeared to have once again regrouped in an area where Israel has already launched punishing assaults. Battles erupted this week in the Zeitoun area on the outskirts of Gaza City, in the northern part of the territory. Northern Gaza was the first target of the ground offensive. Israel said late last year that it had mostly dismantled Hamas in the area.

At least 19 people, including eight women and eight children, were killed overnight in Central Gaza in three different strikes that hit the towns of Zawaida, Maghazi and Deir al Balah, according to Al Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al Balah and an Associated Press journalist who counted the bodies.

Israel's bombardment and ground offensives in Gaza have killed more than 34,800 Palestinians, mostly women and children, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between civilians and combatants in its figures. *—PTI*

People are seen near to their damaged homes after heavy flooding in Baghlan province in northern Afghanistan on Saturday ***PHOTO: PTI***

Flash floods kill more than 300 in northern Afghanistan, says UN

ISLAMABAD, 11 MAY

The UN food agency says more than 300 Afghans have died in flash floods that also destroyed more than 1,000 houses in the northern province of Baghlan. The World Food Agency said Saturday it was distributing fortified biscuits to the survivors of one of the many floods that hit Afghanistan over the last few weeks following unusually heavy rainfall.

The floods hit mostly the northern region of the country. The province of Baghlan bore the brunt of the deluges Friday with officials preliminary reporting at least 50 people dead and properties destroyed in multiple districts.

In neighbouring Takhar province, state-owned media outlets reported the floods killing at least 20 people.

Zabihullah Mujahid, the Chief spokesman for the Taliban government posted on X on Saturday, saying that "hundreds ... have succumbed to these calamitous floods, while a substantial number have sustained injuries."He underscored the provinces of Badakhshan, Baghlan, Ghor and Herat as the worst hit. He added that "the extensive devastation" has resulted in "significant financial losses."

He also said the government had ordered all available resources mobilized to rescue people, transport the injured and recover the bodies of the deceased.

The Taliban defence ministry said in a statement Saturday that the country's air force has already begun evacuating people in Baghlan and has so far rescued a large number of people stuck in flooded and transported a hundred injured people to military hospitals in the region.

In April, 70 people died from heavy rains and flash flooding in the country. About 2,000 homes, three mosques were also damaged. *—PTI*

KENYA FLOODS: PEOPLE CRITICISE GOVT'S RESPONSE

NAIROBI, 11 MAY

Winnie Makinda, 35, says she is facing the worst crisis and lowest moment of her life because of the Kenyan government's response to floods that devastated her poor community in the capital of Nairobi.

The floods and mudslides swept away people and inundated homes, killing at least 267 people and impacting more than 380,000, according to government statistics. The floods are fueled by unusually heavy rainfall during Kenya's rainy season which starts in March and sometimes extends up to June.

In order to save lives in the future, the government last week ordered evacuations and the demolition of structures and buildings that had been built illegally within 30 meters of river banks. Officials say at least 181,000 people have been moved since last week and that measures have been taken to provide temporary shelter, food and other essentials.

But the demolitions have only led to more suffering as those affected say they are being carried out in a chaotic and inhumane way. At least three people have died in the past week when bulldozers brought down structures on top of them, according to rights groups, family members of the deceased and residents who spoke to The Associated Press.

Like hundreds of poor Kenyans whose houses are being demolished, Makinda feels betrayed and abandoned by the government. *—PTI*

Toll from strikes in Congo rises to 35

GOMA, 11 MAY

The death toll in the bombings of two camps for displaced people in eastern Congo last week rose to at least 35 Friday, with an additional two in very critical condition, a local official told The Associated Press.

Éric Bwanapuwa, a lawmaker who represents Goma, the provincial capital of North Kivu state, where the attacks took place, provided the updated figure in an interview Friday. v

The Congolese army and a rebel group known as M23 have blamed each other for the bombings at the Mugunga and Lac Vert displacement camps in eastern Congo.

The US State Department accused M23 and the army of neighboring Rwanda. M23, which is short for the 23 March Movement, is an armed group mainly made up of ethnic Tutsis that broke away from the Congolese army 12 years ago. Congolese President Felix Tshisekedi accuses neighboring Rwanda of destabilizing Congo by backing the M23 rebels. UN experts, along with the US State Department, have also accused Rwanda of backing the rebels. Rwanda denies the claims. *—PTI*

Russian forces launch ground attack in Kharkiv

KYIV, 11 MAY

Russian forces began a renewed ground assault on Ukraine's northeast, killing and injuring several and forcing more than 1,700 civilians to evacuate from the Kharkiv region, local officials said on Saturday.

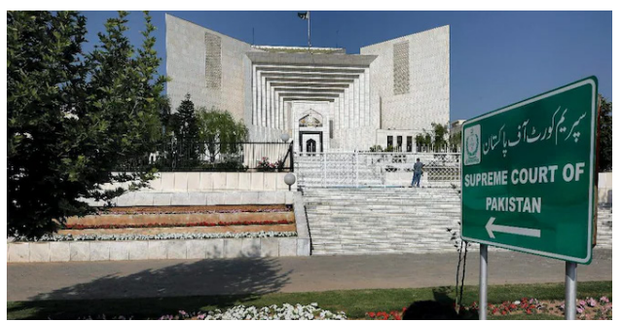
Artillery, mortar, and aerial bombardments hit more than 30 different towns and villages, leaving at least three people dead and five others injured, said Kharkiv governor, Oleh Syniehubov. Ukraine rushed reinforcements to the Kharkiv on Friday to hold off a Russian attempt to breach local defences.

Russian forces stepped up their bombardment of Kharkiv, in late March. Friday's attack signalled a tactical switch in the war by Moscow that Ukrainian officials had been expecting.

Russian military bloggers said the assault could mark the start of a Russian attempt to carve out a "buffer zone" that President Vladimir Putin vowed to create earlier this year to halt frequent Ukrainian attacks on Russian border regions. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy confirmed on Friday evening that Russian forces were expanding their operations. He also called on the country's Western allies to ensure that promised deliveries of military aid would swiftly reach the country's frontlines. *—PTI*

POLITICAL DRAMA

Pakistan's ruling coalition loses 27 reserved seats



The lawmakers thus cannot function as members or partake in assembly proceedings until their status is clarified ***PHOTO: PTI***

LAHORE, 11 MAY

The ruling coalition led by the PML-N in Pakistan's Punjab has been jolted as the provincial assembly's speaker restrained 27 lawmakers on reserved seats after Supreme Court's ruling suspending a lower court's verdict denying the Sunni Ittehad Council its share of reserved seats for women and minorities, according to media reports.

Speaker Malik Mohammad Ahmed Khan issued the ruling barring the women and non-Muslim members appointed to the reserved seats via past notifications of the Election Commission of Pakistan, The Express Tribune newspaper reported.

They cannot function as members or partake in assembly proceedings until their status is clarified by either the ECP or Supreme Court.

Of the suspended MPAs, 23 belong to the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), two to the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and one each to PML-Q and IPP, the Dawn newspaper reported.

The decision was taken on a point of order raised a day ago by opposition lawmaker Rana Aftab of PTI-backed SIC.

Aftab had argued that the apex court had suspended the decision of the ECP of allocating the reserved seats of the SIC to other parties on the plea that the SIC had neither contested elections nor had submitted a list of nominees for the seats reserved for women and minorities. *—PTI*

IMF doubts Pak's ability to repay debts

ISLAMABAD, 11 MAY

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has said that Pakistan faces major debt-repayment challenges and expressed serious doubts over the cash-strapped country's capacity to repay the global lender, according to a media report on Saturday.

The Washington-based bank's assessment of Pakistan's economy came as an IMF support team reached the country on Friday to hold talks with officials here after Islamabad requested a fresh bailout package under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF).

"Pakistan's capacity to repay the fund is subject to significant risks and remains critically dependent on policy implementation and timely external financing," Geo News cited the Washington-based lender as saying in its staff report issued earlier this month on Pakistan. It further said that restoring external viability was critical to ensure Pakistan's capacity to repay the fund, and hinges on strong policy implementation, including, but not limited to, external asset accumulation and exchange rate flexibility.

The global lender noted that the country needed gross financing worth USD 123 billion during the next five years, adding that Pakistan was expected to seek USD 21 billion in fiscal year 2024-25 and USD 23 billion in 2025-26. It said the crisis-hit country was expected to seek USD 22 billion in 2026-27, USD 29 billion in 2027-28, and USD 28 billion in 2028-29. *—PTI*

Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman's visit to Pakistan postponed

ISLAMABAD, 11 MAY

Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman's much-anticipated visit to Pakistan has been deferred for unspecified reasons, a report said on Saturday.

He was earlier expected to arrive in Islamabad on 19 May on a two-day visit, Geo News reported.

Commenting on the visit of the Saudi crown prince, Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zehra Baloch on Friday clarified that details of the visit will be made public as soon as a schedule is worked out between Islamabad and Riyadh. The visit possesses vital importance to cash-strapped Pakistan eyeing big investment from Saudi Arabia in diverse fields. *—PTI*

INACTIVE PANEL

America's debt mounts to $34 T

WASHINGTON, 11 MAY

For Mike Johnson it was effectively a Day 1 priority.

It's well past time, the newly elected House speaker said in October, to establish a bipartisan commission to tackle the federal government's growing USD 34.6 trillion in debt. "The consequences if we don't act now are unbearable," he said, echoing warnings from his predecessor and other House Republicans.

More than six months later, the proposal appears all but dead, extinguished by vocal opposition from both the right and the left. Facing the reality that any fiscal commission would almost certainly suggest that Americans pay more or get less from their government, lawmakers have time and again done what they do so well: punt the problem to the next Congress. And they seem poised to do so again.

Many democrats and left-leaning advocacy groups oppose the commission because they fear it would recommend cuts to Social Security benefits. Supporters of a new debt panel noted that they modeled their bill on something that has succeeded in the past — commissions to consolidate the nation's military bases. When Republican-aligned groups also came out against the bill, including Americans for Tax Reform and the Club for Growth, prospects for moving ahead dampened considerably. Supporters said they will continue pushing for getting a commission approved by the end of this Congress. *—PTI*

Many democrats oppose the commission because they fear it would recommend cuts to Social Security benefits ***PHOTO: AP***

PHOTO: siaec.com.sg

SIAEC to develop Air India's base facility in B'luru

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

Air India has roped in SIA Engineering Company Ltd (SIAEC) as a strategic partner for developing its base maintenance facilities in Bengaluru. The facilities, expected to be ready in 2026, will have wide-body and narrow-body hangars, including associated repair shops. It will support the Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) needs of Air India Group's aircraft fleet. "As part of the partnership, Air India will work closely with SIAEC on the planning, construction, development and operationalisation of Air India's base maintenance facilities in Bengaluru," the airline said in a release on Saturday. Tatas-owned Air India Group has four carriers -- Air India, Air India Express, AIX Connect and Vistara. *—PTI*

IndiGo to have flights between B'luru & Deoghar

KOLKATA, 11 MAY

Low-cost carrier IndiGo has announced direct flights between Jharkhand's Deoghar and Bengaluru three times a week from 1 June, a company statement said. The direct flights will operate on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. On these days, flight number 6E 6435 will take off from Bengaluru at 10.05 am and reach Deoghar at 12.25pm. The return flight, 6E 6437, will leave Deoghar at 12.55pm and land in Bengaluru at 3.25pm, it said. With these new flights, Bengaluru will be airline's fifth destination be directly connected with Deoghar, after Kolkata, Patna, Ranchi, and Delhi, it said. This will not only provide customers with access to the unexplored beauty of Jharkhand's holy city, but will also offer enhanced accessibility. *—PTI*

RBI appoints R Lakshmi Kanth Rao as new ED

MUMBAI, 11 MAY

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has appointed R Lakshmi Kanth Rao as Executive Director (ED) with immediate effect. Before being promoted to ED, Rao served as Chief General Manager-in-Charge in the Department of Regulation. Rao has experience of over three decades in the Reserve Bank having worked in the areas of Regulation of Banks and NBFCs, Supervision of Banks, and Consumer Protection. As Executive Director, Rao will look after Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation, Right to Information Act (FAA), Department of Communication. Rao holds a graduate degree in commerce. *—ANI*

Prestige Estates' CEO Venkata Narayana K resigns

MUMBAI, 11 MAY

Prestige Estates Projects' Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Venkata Narayana K has resigned from the company effective May 10. However, he will continue as non-key managerial personnel (KMP) till August 10 to enable smooth transition. The announcement comes ahead of the company's Q4 earnings scheduled to be announced later this month. Venkata Narayana K became CEO of Prestige Estates in August 2017, following his tenure as chief financial officer and company secretary. The company did not disclose details on succession. Furthermore, the company has outlined its roadmap by appointing various business heads for each vertical and geographies. Prestige Group achieved its highest-ever annual sales at Rs 21,040 crore for FY24, marking a growth of 63 per cent *—PTI*

Monsoon holds key for RBI's future monetary policy

IMD has predicted above-normal monsoon for this year

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

As parts of India witness heatwaves this summer, chances of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) cutting key interest rates have also diminished.

Severe heat conditions in the country are likely to have an impact on food prices, according to a report by the Bank of Baroda, and it asserted that monsoon now holds the key.

IMD has though predicted above-normal monsoon for this year.

Southwest monsoon normally sets in over Kerala on June 1 with a standard deviation of about seven days. These rains are crucial, especially for kharif crops dependent on rains. India has three cropping seasons -- summer, kharif and rabi.

Pressure in food prices has been interrupting the ongoing disinflation process in India, and posing challenges for the final descent of the inflation trajectory to the 4 per cent target.

RBI is focused on bringing down inflation to 4 per cent *PHOTO: PTI*

The RBI is currently focused on bringing down the inflation to 4 per cent target on a durable basis. Along anticipated lines, RBI kept the policy repo rate unchanged at 6.50 per cent, the seventh time in a row. The repo rate is the rate of interest at which the RBI lends to other banks.

Further, the lender's report asserted that heat-wave conditions have impacted the travel sector with air passenger, diesel consumption and toll collections moderating. However, green shoots are visible in higher auto sales, vehicle registrations and electricity demand.

- Pressure in food prices has been interrupting the ongoing disinflation process in India, and posing challenges for the final descent of the inflation trajectory to the 4 per cent target

IMD in its first long range forecast has stated the South-West Monsoon (June-September) this year is expected to be above normal (106 per cent of the long period average). Skymet, a private forecaster, has also forecast a normal monsoon this year.

As per the Bank of Baroda report, so far, the sowing area of summer crop is 7.2 per cent.

In a not-so-good news, the water level in reservoirs dropped to 28 per cent (35 per cent last year) of total storage capacity, the lender's report said. *—ANI*

MISUSE OF IPO PROCEEDS

SEBI bans Varanium Cloud, its promoter from capital market

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

Varanium Cloud Limited, a technology company, and its promoter and managing director Harshawardhan Hanmant Sabale have been banned from the securities market with immediate effect, by the financial market regulator SEBI.

The company was listed on NSE's SME Platform or NSE Emerge on September 27, 2022.

As per the company's disclosures, it was incorporated on December 21, 2017, and was formerly known as Streamcast Cloud Private Limited. Varanium is a technology company and, as per its website, is focused on providing services surrounding digital audio, video, and financial blockchain (for PayFac) based streaming services

As per a SEBI order, the company allegedly misutilised its initial public offer (IPO) proceeds and used dubious transactions to paint a false picture of good financial health and promising growth prospects to the general public.

The order noted that the same is evident from the increase in number of public shareholders from around 1,000 in September 2022 to more than 10,000 in December 2023.

The share price of Varanium also witnessed a significant increase during the said period.

It has prima facie emerged that the money raised through the IPO and subsequent Rights Issue was not used for the intended purpose mentioned in the offer documents, SEBI order said.

In the entire sequence of events and the narrative built by the Promoter through public announcements, a positive sentiment was created which induced a large number of retail investors into purchasing the stock, the order stated. *—ANI*

Defence sector has opportunities worth USD 138 bn

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

India's defence sector holds a lucrative ordering opportunity of USD 138 billion over FY24-32 amid the escalating demand for defence equipment, technologies, and services, offering significant prospects for companies engaged in defence production and technology development, according to a report titled 'India Defence' by Nomura.

The report highlights that India's defence capital expenditure is poised to surge to 37 per cent of the total budget by FY30, marking a substantial increase from the projected 29 percent in FY25. This equates to a cumulative capital outlay of Rs 15.5 trillion over FY24-30, indicating substantial growth compared to previous periods.

According to the report, the defence sector presents lucrative opportunities across various segments. The defence Aerospace sector alone accounts for USD 50 billion, covering investments in aircraft, helicopters, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), avionics, and related systems. Defence Shipbuilding is another significant opportunity area, with USD 38 billion of potential for naval vessels, submarines, patrol boats, and support ships to bolster maritime security.

Defence presents opportunities across various segments. *PHOTO: PTI*

Companies with expertise in defence manufacturing and technology development are well-positioned to capitalize on export opportunities, diversify their revenue streams, and expand their market reach.

The report states that Hindustan Aeronautics (HAL) have the potential for its strong moat in fighter aircraft and helicopters, and significant capability upgrade that provides basis for the development of an indigenous engine program, while Bharat Electronics holds the potential, for its increased visibility on order inflows, conviction on margins delivery and expansion in returns ratios. *—ANI*

India's future is digital; UPI is flagbearer

New Delhi, 11 May

As India celebrates National Technology Day this year, it's crucial to shine a spotlight on the thriving ecosystem driving technology innovation across the nation. India's future is digital, transforming how its citizens learn, work, and connect. India has become world's 3rd largest startup ecosystem and also reached the 40th position in the Global Innovation Index (GII) in 2023 as compared to its 81st rank in 2015. Indian startups have emerged as the vanguards of change, eagerly embracing emerging technologies to propel economic growth. In this transformative journey, venture capital firms played a pivotal role, acting as the nurturing force behind these entrepreneurs, providing guidance, support, and crucial funding to fuel their success. A key emphasis of the Indian government has been on ensuring that the benefits of UPI are not limited to India only; other countries, too, benefit from it. So far, Sri Lanka, Mauritius, France, , and Singapore, among others, have partnered or intending to partner with India on emerging fintech and payment solutions. UPI in digital payments in India has reached close to 80 per cent in 2023. , India accounts for nearly 46 per cent of the world's digital transactions. *—ANI*

During the last week, most sectors faced loss *PHOTO: PTI*

Uncertainty over election results will keep market volatile

MUMBAI, 11 MAY

The Nifty-50 Index and Sensex both experienced losses of around 3 percent each over the past week, while the mid-cap index saw a decline of 3.9 percent. The Indian market has been consistently under pressure from selling by investors, leading to significant volatility in the past week.

In contrast, global markets have maintained their buoyancy, with Brazil, Germany, and the US emerging as the top-performing markets. Experts attribute this disparity to the apprehension surrounding the upcoming elections, which is making investors adopt a cautious stance.

During the last week, all sectoral indices, except Auto and FMCG, witnessed losses on a week-on-week basis. Sectors such as Capital Goods, Consumer Durable, Oil and Gas, Realty, Power, and Bank Nifty suffered the most, with declines ranging between 2 to 4 percent.

Conversely, Auto and FMCG sectors experienced marginal gains during the same period. Moreover, Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) were net sellers, while Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) were net buyers. *—ANI*

- The Nifty-50 Index and Sensex both experienced losses of around 3 percent each over the past week, while the mid-cap index saw a decline of 3.9 percent

India's forex reserves rise USD 3.7 billion in latest week

MUMBAI, 11 MAY

Post three consecutive weeks of decline, India's foreign exchange reserves rose again by USD 3.668 billion to USD 641.590 billion in the week that ended on May 3, RBI data showed.

Prior to the reporting period, the country foreign exchange reserves declined for the third week, after having risen for the seventh straight week to hit an all-time high of USD 648.562 billion.

According to the latest data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI),

India's foreign currency assets (FCA), the biggest component of the forex reserves, rose by USD 4.459 billion to USD 564.161 billion.

India's foreign exchange reserves, which had reached an all-time high are sufficient to cover 11 months of projected imports, according to the Monthly Economic Review report of the Department of Economic Affairs under the Ministry of Finance, released lately.

Forex reserves, or foreign exchange reserves (FX reserves), are assets that are held by a nation's central bank or monetary authority. It is generally held in reserve currencies, usually the US Dollar and, to a lesser degree, the Euro, Japanese Yen, and Pound Sterling.

Typically, the RBI, from time to time, intervenes in the market through liquidity management, including through the sale of dollars, to prevent a steep depreciation in the rupee. *—ANI*

Air India appoints SIA Engineering as strategic partner to develop facilities

BENGALURU, 11 MAY

Air India on Saturday announced it has appointed SIA Engineering Company Limited as its strategic partner for the development of its base maintenance facilities here.

As part of the partnership, Air India will work closely with SIA Engineering Company Limited (SIAEC) on the planning, construction, development and operationalisation of its base maintenance facilities here, they said.

In a statement, Air India said, "Projected to be ready in 2026, the facilities will comprise both wide-body and narrow-body hangars, including associated repair shops, to support the growing Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) needs of the aircraft fleet in Air India Group."

PHOTO: PTI

"The collaboration with SIA Engineering Company will not only help Air India become more self-reliant for the maintenance of its own fleet but it also reiterates our commitment to strengthen India's aviation infrastructure by boosting the growth of the country's MRO industry," Campbell Wilson, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, Air India, said.

Air India had earlier announced setting up a state-of-the-art Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) facilities at Kempegowda International Airport Bengaluru. *—PTI*

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

How to choose a hybrid mutual fund based on your risk appetite?

PUNE, 11 MAY

When it comes to investing in the financial markets, each asset class poses unique opportunities. Equities come with enhanced growth potential but high volatility. Debt can lend stability to a portfolio, especially in turbulent markets, but may not generate significant capital appreciation in the long term.

Investing in multiple asset classes can therefore help capture the benefits of different types of securities in different market conditions. Hybrid funds allow mutual fund investors to achieve this diversification through a single investment.

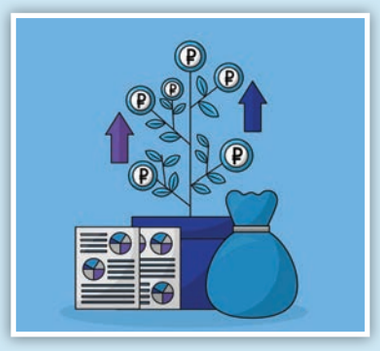
However, there are several hybrid fund categories in India – each with a different risk profile. Investors, therefore, should familiarise themselves with these types to select a that aligns with their risk tolerance and goals.

Hybrid schemes for different risk appetites

The variation in the equity-debt ratio across hybrid fund schemes means that the balance of risk and potential reward differs. Below are the hybrid fund categories that may suit investors as per their risk level. *—PTI*

TYPES OF HYBRID MUTUAL FUNDS

THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE BOARD OF INDIA (SEBI) CLASSIFIES HYBRID MUTUAL FUNDS INTO THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES



1. Conservative hybrid funds: Primarily invest in debt securities (75%-90%) of its portfolio, with a small portion in equities (10%-25%).

2. Balanced hybrid funds: Are almost evenly distributed between debt and equity, with a 40%-60% allocation to each.

3. Aggressive hybrid funds: Primarily equity-oriented, these funds allocate 65%-80% in equities and the remainder in debt.

4. Dynamic asset allocation funds: These funds dynamically adjust the equity and debt allocation based on market conditions.

5. Multi-asset allocation funds: Invest in at least three different asset classes, with a minimum of 10% in each, providing broad diversification.

6. Arbitrage funds: Invest primarily in arbitrage opportunities created by price differences between two market segments such as cash and derivatives.

7. Equity Savings: Invests at least 65% of its assets in equities and at least 10% in debt. It can also invest in arbitrage opportunities.

Neeraj finishes second in Doha Diamond League

Jakub Vadlejch clinched the men's javelin throw event

DOHA, 11 MAY

Olympic and world champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra vowed to go one step ahead in the next Diamond League meeting after finishing a close second during the Doha leg here.

Chopra finished second at the Doha Diamond League as his big final effort of 88.36m fell short by just two centimetres of Jakub Vadlejch's winning effort on Friday night.

The 26-year-old Chopra trailed the veteran Czech -- who won the title with his third throw of 88.38m -- throughout the competition.

Chopra, taking part in his first competition of the season, made a last-ditch effort but the Indian superstar failed to defend the title.

Two-time world champion Anderson Peters took the third sport with a throw measuring 86.62m.

"The most important competition for me this year is the Paris Olympics, but Diamond League meetings are important too. This was the opener for me this season, I finished second with a narrow two-centimetre margin but next time I will try to draw far and try to win," Chopra said.

The next Diamond League meeting which has men's javelin as a discipline will be held in Paris on 7 July.

Chopra also thanked the Indian diaspora in Qatar for supporting him.

"The support I am getting from the Indian people here in Qatar is always amazing, there aren't words enough for me to thank them for their support. —*PTI*

Neeraj Chopra, of India, makes an attempt in the men's javelin throw during the Diamond League athletics meet in Doha **PHOTO: PTI**

Jakub Vadlejch who won the title **PHOTO: PTI**

IPL 2024

CSK look to rekindle playoffs hopes

CHENNAI, 11 MAY

In need of a win to firm up their position in the IPL playoff race, Chennai Super Kings have the heavy task of nullifying a deeply hurt and frustrated Rajasthan Royals here on Sunday.

Let's take a quick assessment of the two protagonists' situations. The Super Kings are currently fourth in the standings with 12 points from as many games but the defeat against Gujarat Titans on Friday has added dollops of pressure on them, and now they need victory in their remaining two matches.

The Royals, on the other hand, are second with 16 points but they are smarting from two successive defeats against Sunrisers Hyderabad, which was by just a run, and Delhi Capitals.

They are in no real danger of missing the playoff spot, but the Sanju Samson-led side will be eager to return to the winning ways at the earliest and enter the knockouts.

What had hurt CSK against GT was the malfunction of their top order consisting of Ajinkya Rahane, Rachin Ravindra and skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad and they would be desperate to regain the momentum in Chepauk.

PHOTO: PTI

Ravindra might be given another go against the Royals, but it could be a make-or-break situation for him.

Although it was pleasing to see Daryl Mitchell and Moeen Ali among runs, Shivam Dube, who has been CSK's bulwark this season, has gone silent ever since he was selected to the Indian team for the upcoming T20 World Cup.

Having scored a 13-ball 21 against GT, he has twin causes to fire -- to justify his selection for the World Cup and carry his team closer to the playoffs.

As for the CSK's bowling, Tushar Deshpande once again fired against GT while Shardul Thakur surprised all with his economical outing. —*PTI*

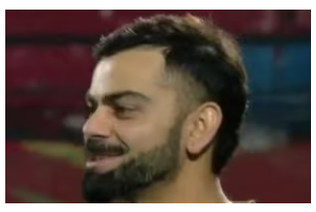
TODAY'S MATCH

Time: 3:30 PM

Where To Watch:

Jio Cinema, Star Sports Network

Stadium: MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai



Virat Kohli **PHOTO: PTI**

IN-FORM RCB WARY OF VOLATILE DC IN A MUST-WIN MATCH

BENGALURU, 11 MAY

Pushed into a tight corner, Royal Challengers Bengaluru rose above their frailties to notch four wins on the trot to stay alive in the race to playoffs, but a volatile Delhi Capitals offer them a different challenge in their penultimate IPL league match here on Sunday.

In the run-up to this match, RCB had beaten Gujarat Titans twice, Punjab Kings and Sunrisers Hyderabad once each.

While the victory over SRH was valiant, RCB did not face much challenge from the floundering Titans and Kings.

But the Capitals are a team unlike any other as they have oscillated between brilliant and ordinary in the span of a few days.

On 27 April, the Rishabh Pant-led side posted a hefty 257/4 in their 10-run win over Mumbai Indians and on April 29, they made a lowly 153/9 while capitulating against Kolkata Knight Riders.

The RCB, currently seventh with 10 points from 12 matches, will desperately hope not to run into that brilliant Capitals as a defeat can undo their good work in the last four matches.

But their confidence will be high, courtesy strong and consistent batting effort led by talisman Virat Kohli.

—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Gill and Sudharsan disrupted our plans: Fleming

AHMEDABAD, 11 MAY

Chennai Super Kings head coach Stephen Fleming said the defending champions were undone by the "high calibre" batting effort of Gujarat Titans' openers skipper Shubman Gill and B Sai Sudharsan during their 35-run defeat in an IPL match here. Gill (104 off 55b) and Sudharsan (103 off 51b) notched up destructive centuries in an opening stand of 210 runs to propel GT to 231/3 and then restricted the defending champions to 196/8 to stay alive in the playoff race. The win lifted GT from the bottom of the table to the eighth spot. They have 10 points from 12 games.—*PTI*

Horse polo returns after 100 years

MUMBAI, 11 MAY

After a huge gap of 100 years, the royal sport of horse polo will return to the iconic Bombay Gymkhana, the prestigious venue in Mumbai which hosted the first cricket Test match played on Indian soil. The Bombay Gymkhana is set to once again host the Bombay Gymkhana Arena Polo Championship at its hallowed turf on Sunday, as the premier polo event is being revived at this iconic venue after almost a century.

"The Bombay Gymkhana Polo Challenge Cup" was founded in 1882 and the inaugural edition was won by the Central India Horse team, but it was brought back home to the Bombay Gymkhana in 1885 by the Gymkhana's polo team. Sanjiv Saran Mehra, President of Bombay Gymkhana, informed on Saturday, "As a precursor to the Bombay Gymkhana 150th year celebrations in 2025 we have plans to organize various sporting events, some new additions (like the Bombay Gymkhana 10K run which was held in March 2024 or reviving some sports events linked to our rich sporting heritage. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

DJOKOVIC WINS HIS OPENER AT THE ITALIAN OPEN

ROME, 11 MAY

Novak Djokovic took a little while to get going in his first match in nearly a month.He cleaned up his game after dropping his first two service games with some sloppy play, though, and completed a 6-3, 6-1 win over left-handed French qualifier Corentin Moutet in his opening match at the Italian Open on Friday.

"I haven't practiced with a lefty in a while, so it took me a little bit of time to adjust to the different rotation on the balls," Djokovic said. "The first four games were quite bad for me. ... But then I played well."

The top-ranked Djokovic hadn't played since he lost to Casper Ruud in the Monte Carlo Masters semifinals on April 13.

The 24-time Grand Slam champion is also without a title this year — the first time he's reached May without a trophy since 2018 when he was returning from a right elbow injury.But Rome, where he's a six-time champion, is one of Djokovic's favorite tournaments. —*AP*

Novak Djokovic **PHOTO: AFP**

Manchester City's English midfielder Phil Foden celebrates scoring the team's second goal at Fulham **PHOTO: AFP**

Rafael Nadal was overpowered by Hurkacz at his 1st meeting

ROME, 11 MAY

There was no doubting Rafael Nadal's commitment and desire during his first meeting with a top-10 player in 1.5 years.Nadal's surgically repaired hip and his 37-year-old legs just didn't provide him with the necessary means to be competitive enough on Saturday as ninth-ranked Hubert Hurkacz overpowered the 22-time Grand Slam champion on the Spaniard's beloved clay for a 6-1, 6-3 victory in the third round of the Italian Open.Nadal, who is still regaining his fitness after missing nearly all of 2023 with a hip injury that required surgery, appeared slow at times and lacked the lucidness to finish off points.Twice in the first set, Nadal missed drop shot attempts to hand Hurkacz breaks off his serve. —*AP*

Anderson to retire after Lord's Test against WI

LONDON, 11 MAY

Legendary pacer James Anderson on Saturday announced that the first Test against the West Indies this summer will be his final appearance for England, bringing down the curtains on an illustrious career spanning over 20 years.

Regarded as one of the greatest bowlers of all time, the 41-year-old is England's leading wicket-taker and is one of only three bowlers to take over 700 Test scalps.

"Hi everyone. Just a note to say that the first Test of the summer at Lord's will be my last Test," Anderson wrote on his Instagram."It's been an incredible 20 years representing my country, playing the game I've loved since I was a kid. I'm going to miss walking out for England so much.

"But I know the time is right to step aside and let others realize their dreams just like I got to because there is no greater feeling," he added.

Anderson's announcement comes after England red-ball coach Brendon McCullum conveyed to the seamer that they are looking at the future, with an eye on the Ashes 2025-26 in Australia.

Anderson made his Test debut back in 2003 and has since claimed a remarkable 700 wickets in 187 Test matches. He currently ranks third on the all-time list of Test wicket-takers, trailing behind spinners Muttiah Muralitharan of Sri Lanka and Australia's Shane Warne.

"I couldn't have done it without the love and support of Daniella, Lola, Ruby, and my parents. A huge thank you to them. Also, thank you to the players and coaches who have made this the best job in the world." —*PTI*

James Anderson **PHOTO: AFP**

Pant to miss RCB game due to suspension

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

Delhi Capitals captain Rishabh Pant will miss Sunday's crucial match against Royal Challengers Bengaluru after he was handed a one-match suspension for maintaining a slow over-rate for the third time this IPL season. Pant was also fined Rs 30 lakh for the Code of Conduct breach that took place during DC's 20-run win against Rajasthan Royals on 7 May here. DC was 10 minutes behind time at the start of the final over in that game.—*PTI*

Foden and Gvardiol help City to a big win

DUBAI, 11 MAY

Manchester City hit the top of the Premier League with one week of the season left as two goals by Josko Gvardiol and one each from Phil Foden and Julian Alvarez sealed an emphatic 4-0 victory at Fulham FC.

City's stroll in the London sunshine, their seventh successive league win and 16th consecutive victory over Fulham in all competitions, moved them two points clear of Arsenal.

Pep Guardiola's relentless side, closing in on an unprecedented fourth English title in a row, has 85 points from 36 games, with Arsenal on 83 having also played 36.

Arsenal can regain top spot by beating Manchester United on Sunday but City, who play their game in hand at Tottenham Hotspur on Tuesday, are two wins away from making history.

City are now two wins away from retaining their Premier League title, and will turn attention to Arsenal's trip to Manchester United on Sunday before the Blues are back in London to play their game in hand at Tottenham on Tuesday.

Pep Guardiola was given a fitness scare as illness ruled Jack Grealish out of the trip to Fulham, but they showed no signs of missing him when Josko Gvardiol was in such sparkling form - he danced into the area for the opening goal and stuck out a boot for a brace after Phil Foden had scored City's second.

That result also confirms that Liverpool cannot win the title, so confirmation we are down to a two-horse race. A race City continues to show no signs of slowing in. —*AP*

PHOTO: AFP

Dominic Thiem to retire at the end of 2024

PARIS, 11 MAY

Former US Open champion Dominic Thiem of Austria announced on Friday that he will retire from international tennis at the end of the 2024 season because of a wrist injury. Thiem is aged 30 and turned professional in 2011, winning 17 titles overall in a career spanning more than a decade. He made his announcement on social media on Friday that the 2024 season will be his last in international tennis. Very beautiful message that the season 2024 is going to be my last one.—*AP*

SERIE A

Como ends 21-year wait for promotion

MADRID, 11 MAY

Como secured a return to Serie A on Friday for the first time since 2003 with a 1-1 draw at home to Cosenza that earned them the runners-up spot in Italy's second tier.

They will be joined in the top flight next season by Serie B champions Parma, who made sure of their promotion at the start of the month. Como suffered multiple bankruptcies and tumbled down the pyramid after being relegated from Serie A a little over two decades ago.

The club from Lombardy have former Arsenal teammates Cesc Fabregas and Thierry Henry as minority shareholders, with ex-Chelsea midfielder Dennis Wise as a board member.

Como only returned to professional football with their promotion to Serie C in 2019. But, bankrolled by Indonesian tobacco giants Djarum, they have stormed through the divisions.

The third promoted club will be decided by play-offs featuring the teams finishing between third and eighth, which include Venezia and Sampdoria. —*AP*

Como players celebrate after securing promotion to Serie A **PHOTO: AFP**

- Como only returned to professional football with their promotion to Serie C in 2019